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THE

HAVERFORD



EDITION

OF

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY



THE NAVIGATING COMMITTEE OF

THE THREE HOURS FOR LUNCH CLUB

FELIX RIESENBERG, FRANKLIN ABBOTT, CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

FROM A DRAWING BY MUIRHEAD BONE

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
AND DON MARQUIS

PANDORA LIFTS THE LID

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
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1927

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TO
Room 515
THE TRAYMORE

NOTE

The authors of this tale have frequently been entertained by the comments of readers who have identified certain passages as unmistakably from the hand of one or other collaborator. They take this opportunity of stating, in affectionate mutual exoneration, that the plot and scheme of the romance were planned by Mr. Marquis; the actual writing was done by Mr. Morley.

THE LEADING CHARACTERS

In Their Order of Appearance

MELVILLE KENNEDY, *an uncle*

MISS VAN VELSOR, *a schoolmistress*

TOM CARMICHAEL, *an aviator*

MR. AND MRS. MULLION, *caretakers*

BRADWAY, *a valet*

MRS FERRY, *Mr. Crockett's daughter*

JERICO MCGOWAN, *a hotel-keeper*

PANDORA KENNEDY

MARJORIE CONWAY

EDNA TAREYTON

FANNIE KATE JONES

ANNIE SUE JONES

WILLIE MAY JONES

JACQUELINE STUART

} *pupils at Miss Van Velsor's
school*

GLOUCESTER EVANS, *a teacher*

ALEXANDER J. CROCKETT, *a millionaire*

HUTCHINS, *a rascal*

BOZE, *another*

LA ROCQUE, *a sea captain*

BLACKSTONE, *a detective*

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PART ONE

TOLD BY MELVILLE KENNEDY

PANDORA LIFTS THE LID

PART ONE

TOLD BY MELVILLE KENNEDY

I WAS thinking, as I got on the Long Island train at Penn Station, that I hadn't quite played fair with Pandora. Considering that I am not only her uncle, but her guardian (she was only a child when her parents went down with the *Titanic*) I had rather neglected her. Perhaps you'll admit that an eighteen-year-old girl is a considerable responsibility for a bachelor of forty (or thereabouts) with wandering habits. Besides, my work as a consulting engineer takes me around the world a good deal. But whatever the excuses may be, I did feel that I hadn't been looking after her as closely as I should. I had been persuaded to send her to that school of Miss Van Velsor's because most of the girls of her "set" were there, but I had never been altogether easy

in my mind about it. There's nothing more terrible than the usual millionaire débutante, and I'd been wondering if that was what they were training her for. And so, coming back earlier than I expected from abroad (I'd been in South Africa all summer), I thought I would run out to Marathon and pay her a surprise visit.

See here! I'm not a professional writer, and you'll have to let me tell this in my own way. Marjorie Conway and I have divided the story into slabs and we're going to take turns. Now that I think about it, I'm not quite sure that the way we've split it up is altogether fair. It looks as though Marjorie gets most of the humorous bits and I have to do the philosophizing. But maybe some curious sidelights on the education of girls will develop.

I've knocked about the map a lot, and what with engineering and big-game hunting and trying to keep the Kennedy fortune more or less intact and useful during recent social and economic hurricanes, I've seen some queer things. But if any one had predicted that a boarding school for girls would give me the oddest and most exciting adventure of all . . . However, I believe I've heard that the right way to tell a story is to leap straight into it.

It was one of those warm still afternoons we often get toward the end of October. On the

train I smoked my pipe and enjoyed the autumn colours on that familiar landscape, but all the time I was thinking about Pandora. She's the only Kennedy in the younger generation, and I didn't want her to grow up merely an heiress and nothing else. For more than ten years I had been, to put it so, the only parent she had; but in the three or four years she had been at the Van Velsor school I had seen very little of her. You know how it is: there are certain moments when one seems to think very straight and fast, and suddenly everything appears in a new perspective. Well, I was realizing that it was wrong to let the girl spend most of her time at school or visiting round among her friends. Of course her home was supposed to be with me, in the old place at Barclay's Inlet, but how much had she been there? Not that she was unhappy! One look at Pandora, her clear amber eyes and curly bobbed hair and something both gallant and humorous in her bearing, would show you that she could get amusement out of almost any situation.

Marathon lies on the north shore of Long Island, at the head of Quahaug Bay, about thirty miles from New York. When I got there I declined the various taxis and walked down to the school. It's a couple of miles out of the village—an old Colonial house in beautiful grounds right by

the water. I guess Miss Van Velsor has done pretty well for herself with that enterprise. If a girls' school once gets the reputation of being "fashionable," its fortune is made. If it is regarded as "exclusive," then it doesn't really need to be, and isn't. I could never find out that any one was excluded who could afford the fees. Miss Van Velsor was one of those elderly maids who are so intensely genteel and correct that one suspects the highly groomed exterior of concealing an emptiness within. There was, to me, something both comic and gruesome in the spectacle of this withered damsel wearing tweed sporting clothes and counterfeiting the cross-country manners of the North Shore smart set. At any rate, she was a good business woman. She had sixty or seventy girls in her school, and they all came from the wealthiest families in the land.

You know how quickly one gets an impression of something being wrong. As I approached the school I had a queer feeling that the well-oiled machinery of Miss Van Velsor's establishment had suffered a breakdown. The lodge at the front gateway was empty, and the gatekeeper, usually there to keep random visitors from wandering through the sacred grounds, was absent. On the tennis courts a group of girls were standing, not playing, but talking together. I thought they stared at me rather oddly as I passed. In

front of the house several riding horses were standing, with a groom. I could tell, by the way they had pawed up the neat blue gravel, that they had been waiting a long time. At the portecochère was a powerful little canary-coloured roadster. As I came up the driveway I saw a man in a leather coat stride briskly out of the house and jump into the car. He whirled round the circular road with a great roaring of engine, and swept off in such a hurry that he didn't even notice me. He looked to me like young Tom Carmichael.

I rang the bell, and a maid came to the door.

"I want to see Miss Kennedy," I said. "Tell her it's her uncle."

I was ushered into the drawing room. As I passed through the white-panelled hall several girls in riding clothes were coming down the broad stairway. Again I noticed that I was scrutinized rather sharply. As I sat waiting—I waited a long time, with plenty of chance to study the luxuriously embossed catalogue of the school that lay conspicuously on the mahogany table—I was planning just how I would surprise Pandora with a little brooch of Kimberley diamonds I had brought back for her from Cape Town. I was irritated to hear, behind the half-open door, unmistakable rustlings and giggles. Some of the pupils were spying and tittering.

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And this, I thought to myself, was supposed to be the absolute pinnacle of breeding and finish in girls' schools. I brooded over possible interpretations of that phrase, a "finishing school."

I was looking at a little book that lay on another table, near the windows. It had caught my eye by its unusual title: *Assorted Humbugs*, by Gloucester Evans. The name of the author sounded vaguely familiar, but I couldn't place it. Apparently it was some sort of free-verse poetry, but I had only just glanced at it when a quick step sounded behind me and I heard the door close

"Well, my dear," I said, turning——

It was not Pandora, but Miss Van Velsor herself. She advanced as though she were a projectile of some sort. (I hate excitable women.)

"Well, this *is* a surprise!" she said. "Just back from some remote corner of the globe, I suppose?"

It's queer how some people have the capacity to annoy one by the most innocent remarks. I had an absurd desire to say that globes don't have corners.

"South Africa," I said. "I wanted to see Pandora."

"Oh, bad luck! She isn't in."

"I suppose she'll be back presently?" I asked. "I've been away so long, I was thinking I ought

to see something of her. I thought I'd take her home to Barclay's Inlet with me. I can run her over every morning in the car, on my way to town. You wouldn't mind her being a day pupil for a while?"

"Now, Mr. Kennedy," she said, with her best sort of good-sportsmanlike vivacity, "you know my rules. It's part of the value of my training that I don't let *anything* interrupt the school routine. When the girls are here, they should be *here*."

"But I thought you said she isn't here?"

To my surprise Miss Van Velsor seemed upset by this remark, and became quite shrill.

"You know what I mean," she exclaimed. "As a matter of fact, I let Pandora and several of the other girls go to town for a little expedition. The Museum and a concert, that sort of thing. They may not be back until late tonight."

"Oh, very well," I said, much disappointed. "Then will you give her my love and ask her to call me up at home in the morning?"

We had a little talk, and Miss Van Velsor kept protesting against my idea of having Pandora come as a day pupil. Pandora, she insisted, was one of the most charming and influential of the girls, and she couldn't bear the idea of having her drop out of the home life of the school.

"She's just at that age," Miss Van Velsor added, "when refined and cultured surroundings mean so much in settling a young girl's character."

This wasn't very tactful, and I very nearly replied that associating with her uncle would not debauch the child. But there was no use in quarrelling with the woman. I couldn't help noticing that she seemed agitated and ill at ease; I wondered whether the prospect of losing the boarding fees might account for it. I was about to ask permission to ring for a taxi, to take me over to Barclay's Inlet, when a flash of yellow passed the windows and I saw the same young man pull up in his car.

"Isn't that Tom Carmichael?" I asked.

I had known Tom slightly. He was a rather dashing youngster who had served in aviation during the war, and regarded himself as something of a soldier of fortune. The last I had heard he was attached to an aircraft factory on the Island, and had several times taken some of Miss Van Velsor's pupils over the Sound in a hydroplane. In fact, he had even infected Pandora with the idea that she ought to have a plane of her own. I had had to be quite definite with Miss Van Velsor that I didn't consider flying a necessary part of young girls' education. One of Miss Van Velsor's notions seemed to be that her

curriculum ought to have all the very latest stunts in both sport and æsthetics. Either it was classic dancing (which I learned about by seeing in *Vogue* a photo of Pandora and her classmates capering about the beach wearing, apparently, only some gauze scarves) or else it was special tuition in the deepest science of Mah Jongg (with extra fees) or hydroplaning in leather knickerbockers. Tom had been rather smitten with Pandora, and was much chagrined when I forbade her going flying with him.

Miss Van Velsor said Yes, and looked more upset than ever. And while I was wondering what could be disturbing her so, there was a rap at the door and Carmichael came in without waiting for an answer.

To my surprise, when he saw me his face brightened amazingly.

"Thank God!" he said. "Have you brought Pandora with you?"

II

I thought Miss Van Velsor was going to swoon. It was the only evidence of the old-fashioned female that I have ever seen in that remarkable woman. At any rate, she burst into tears. By this time I was both worried and angry.

"No," I said, "I have not brought Pandora with me. I landed from the *Aquitania* this

morning, and came straight here to see her, even before going home. Kindly tell me what this is all about?"

"In twenty years' experience," cried Miss Van Velsor, "this is the first time anything of this sort has happened to me!"

"Of *what* sort?" I said. "Out with it! What's the trouble? Has Pandora run away?"

"I lied to you when I said I had let her go to New York. I don't know *where* she is. She's disappeared."

"Worse than that," said Carmichael. "Pandora's vanished, and six other girls with her."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Seven girls at once? It's unbelievable."

"It's true," bleated Miss Van Velsor. "I didn't dare tell you, I'm still hoping they'll come back. There must be some explanation. Mr. Carmichael is the only one I've told. If the news gets out, the school will be ruined."

"It certainly will," I said. "If you've let anything happen to Pandora, I'll make it hot for you."

But inwardly I had a miserable feeling that it was as much my fault as hers, for having left the girl in the care of others for so long.

"It's all that Evans!" said Carmichael furiously. "He's gone, too. He's had them kidnapped, I'll bet anything. That's what comes

of having a parlour socialist as a teacher in your school."

"Who's Evans?" I said.

"Gloucester Evans," said Miss Van Velsor. "He teaches the girls English literature. Yes, he's disappeared also."

My eye fell on the book on the table.

"What, the *Assorted Humbugs* man?" I said.

"Yes, a damned poet," said Carmichael. "A good name for his book, for of all the humbugs I ever saw, he's the limit, with his genteel radicalism and his pacifist talk. These girls are all the daughters of capitalists, and I believe Evans has had them kidnapped by his bolshevist friends, to hold for ransom."

"I remember Pandora describing him to me when he came here a year ago," I said. "He didn't sound to me like a kidnapper."

"He came very highly recommended," said Miss Van Velsor. "But how do you explain his disappearing at the same time with the seven girls?"

"Now, look here," I said. "All this is getting us nowhere. Miss Van Velsor, please sit down and give me all the information you can. Then we can decide what's to be done."

"You *won't* let it get out?" she wailed. "The school will be ruined if this becomes public. I've told the girls that Pandora and the others

are spending a few days in town, but I'm afraid they suspect something already."

I made her sit down and talk consecutively.

"Yesterday morning," said Miss Van Velsor, "it was beautiful warm weather, and Pandora came to me to ask if she and some of the girls couldn't go for a long walk and take their lunch with them. It was their riding morning, anyway, so I suggested they take the horses. But Pandora said they were tired of riding and wanted to walk. And then she asked if Mr. Evans could go with them, because this particular little group of girls had been rehearsing a play, in which Mr. Evans was coaching them, and she said they wanted a chance to practise their parts off in the country somewhere, away from the school. That seemed to me reasonable enough, and I don't like the girls to go off across country alone, so I asked Mr. Evans to go with them."

"Who were the girls?" I asked.

"There were seven. Pandora, Marjorie Conway, Edna Tareyton, Fanny Kate, Annie Sue, Willie May——"

"Surely that's more than seven?" I said, puzzled.

"No, no; those are the Jones girls from Atlanta. They all have double names. Fanny Kate and Annie Sue are twins, eighteen years

old; and Willie May is their younger sister, thirteen. And there was little Jacqueline Stuart, also thirteen. I was surprised at their wanting the two smaller girls to go with them, but Pandora asked particularly."

"Wait a minute," I said. "Let me get this straight. There were Pandora and four girls of her own age—Marjorie Conway, Edna Tareyton, and the Jones twins; and two younger children—another Jones and Jacqueline Stuart."

"That's right," she said.

I must confess that I was staggered. Quite apart from my own anxiety about Pandora, these other girls were daughters of men known all over the country. Conway, the automobile manufacturer; Tareyton, head of a huge steel corporation; Jones, whose soft drinks were served at every soda fountain from coast to coast; Stuart, a United States Senator—if the news ever got out that these children were missing it would mean scare-heads in every newspaper printed. The publicity would be appalling.

"Have you informed the parents?" I asked.

Miss Van Velsor had told no one but Carmichael, in whose enterprise she had much confidence, and the two gardeners, who had been sent to scout along the shores of the Bay to look for traces. They were to telephone if they found anything, but had been gone all day without re-

porting. The head mistress was obviously almost distracted with alarm; I couldn't help feeling that the blow to the prestige of her guilt-edged school worried her even more than the fate of the missing pupils. She begged me frantically not to inform the girls' families yet; she said she felt sure there must be some reasonable explanation for the disappearance; they might come back at any moment.

"Well," I said, "you realize you can't keep a thing of this sort quiet very long. Your teachers, pupils and servants are probably buzzing with gossip and curiosity already. The children here will write home to their families. I agree with you, we don't want any scandal, but we've got to take steps immediately. If the girls don't turn up pretty soon, the whole thing will be in the papers."

Miss Van Velsor's eyes flashed. She was a woman of extraordinary decision. "I shall call the whole school together at supper-time to-night," she said. "I'll explain the situation to them. I will put them all within bounds, and forbid them to mention this in their letters. If necessary, I'll read every letter that goes out of the school. My teachers will coöperate with me. I asked Mr. Carmichael to call up a private detective agency. Did you do so?"

"I got the head of the Blackstone agency on

the wire," said Carmichael. "Their man will come out here at once."

So far, while greatly puzzled, I could not take the matter altogether tragically. Carmichael kept muttering that Evans had some sinister connection with it, but this seemed to me absurd. A minor poet might conceivably run away with one girl, but it would take a D'Annunzio to make off with seven at once. The party had left only the day before, Miss Van Velsor said; a picnic lunch had been prepared for them, and they were to return in time for supper. She had not felt any special anxiety until it grew dark. About half-past six, just as she was beginning to be frightened, there had been a telephone message. A girl's voice, which sounded very like Jacqueline Stuart, asked for her and said, "I'm speaking for Pandora Kennedy. We may be late getting back. Don't worry!"

"Is that you, Jacqueline?" Miss Van Velsor had said. "Where are you?" But there was no answer. She heard the receiver put down at the other end.

Miss Van Velsor had just told me this when she was called to the telephone. She came back very pale.

"Edward, one of the gardeners, has just rung up," she said. "He and the other man have been along every inch of the water front on the bay.

Opposite Barclay's Inlet, right out on the Sound, they found a red tam-o'-shanter on the beach. Pandora was wearing one when she left."

"At Barclay's Inlet!" I said. "Why, that's right near my house."

"It—it was wet," said Miss Van Velsor hysterically. "No footprints on the sand. It had *floated* in."

"Now, listen!" I said. "Don't go off the handle prematurely. They can't have had an accident on the water in this fine calm weather. If they've been kidnapped, whoever's got them will take mighty good care of them, for his own interests. If they've been to Barclay's Inlet they must have been near my house. Carmichael and I will rush over there in his car, and see if we can learn anything."

Something definite to be done was Tom Carmichael's strong suit. He was outside and in his yellow car in a moment and I heard the engine begin to hum.

"There's a caretaker on my place," I said to Miss Van Velsor. "Perhaps he will have seen them. If the girls have been taken on a boat, I'll get out my yacht and trace them. If there were any really bad news, we'd have heard it by now. When the Blackstone man gets here, tell him everything. I'll call you up from Barclay's Inlet."

"I think Mr. Carmichael's right," said Miss Van Velsor. "Evans has something to do with this."

"Well, evidently," I said. "But he doesn't sound like a kidnapper to me. Let me take his book along, perhaps that'll give some clues."

I slipped it in my pocket.

Carmichael was sitting impatiently with his hand on the gear lever.

"If I get hold of that Evans guy," he said, "I'll shoot him."

III

I had objected to Pandora's airplaning with Tom Carmichael because I considered him unnecessarily rash. He had taken her over my house in his De Haviland, and performed the "falling leaf" for my benefit, because (as Pandora said) they thought it would amuse me. But I had not known the full vivacity of the young man's temperament, until we drove, that afternoon, the ten miles to Barclay's Inlet. Our course, along the shore road, led past the former home of that venerable poet who wrote *Thanatopsis*. Just outside that house is a dangerous masked curve, and as Carmichael took it (in the thickening dusk) at forty miles an hour, I thought there would be a humorous irony in our being smashed to kindling at the very doorstep of the

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bard who had written so persuasively about Death. I have never been accused of undue timidity, but I do maintain that aviators are too paradoxical as chauffeurs. In the air, they drive as though they were on solid earth; and on the ground, as though they were in the air.

It was already growing dusk, and a series of angry honks brawled along the road as we roared by, Carmichael not even bothering to dim his blazing lights as he shot past other cars. Finally I remarked that it would not help matters much if we were to come a crash.

"I'm sorry," he said, easing up a little on the gas pedal. "You've been abroad all summer. You probably haven't heard of several nasty kidnapping cases there have been lately. If a gang of ruffians have got hold of those girls there's no knowing what might happen. That fellow Evans is a socialist nut, crazy enough to dope out almost any kind of lunacy. I don't mean that he would pull any rough stuff himself, but he might be a tool in the hands of some who would."

"If he's what you describe, how on earth did he land a position at Miss Van Velsor's? Her whole school is built up on the glories of capital. I thought she prided herself on not standing for any radical notions."

"Lord knows," he replied grimly. "Evans is one of those picturesque poetical freaks that

women eat alive. The girls are crazy about him. He talks to them about the millennium. Deep romantic voice and dark earnest eyes and all that stuff. He's the Assorted Humbug, all right. I'd like to look up his war record."

It was six o'clock when we reached the little wood-road that runs in to Barclay's Inlet. All that neck of land is very lonely. In fact, people who know Long Island only by hearsay, or by the main motoring turnpikes, have no idea what a lot of delightful wild country we have. My father bought most of that peninsula long ago, and left it uncleared for the sake of the autumn gunning. He used the house only as a summer camp, but I have made it my chief home for ten years past. The social racket doesn't interest me much, and I like the quietness. But I couldn't help realizing that if the girls had been wandering about those woods they could easily have got into trouble without any one hearing about it. There are a lot of pretty rough characters who frequent that shore of the Sound.

As we came out of the trees into the little cove I saw to my surprise that the house was blazing with lights. Something was going on, evidently. Mullion, the caretaker, did not know I was coming home. He and his wife lived in a cottage on the place; there was no reason why they should have the lights turned on in the house itself. I

was greatly relieved, for I thought Pandora must have brought the girls over there, and they were having some sort of shindy.

We drove up to the front door, found it open, and ran into the hall. In spite of the blaze of lamps, the house was absolutely silent—uncannily so.

"Pandora!" I called. There was no answer. Then I heard a creaking tread in the passage that runs from the head of the stairs. An agitated face peeped around the corner of the wall. It was Mullion, and his look of panic was almost funny.

"My word, sir," he said. "You did startle me."

"Is Miss Pandora here?"

"Miss Pandora? No, sir, I 'aven't seen 'er in weeks. She come over to get some books when that school of 'ers started, she ain't been here since."

"Come downstairs," I said angrily, for he was still peering ridiculously round the corner. "What's that you're hiding?"

"A gun, sir," and he advanced, holding one of my double-barrelled duck guns.

"What are you doing prowling round the place with a shotgun? And why all the lights?"

He came down the stairs rather lurchingly, and I seized the weapon and uncocked it. His mind

was sober enough, but I could see that his legs still carried some liquor. I would have expected his legs to show more staying power than his head—they've had more exercise. Still, it was the first time in his seven years' service that anything had gone wrong, and I trusted him completely.

"Begging your pardon, sir," he said, "but the 'ouse 'as been broken into, and we thought maybe the thieves was still here. I was looking for 'em."

At this moment Mrs. Mullion appeared through the dining room, with a face not less fearful than her husband's. She stood speechless, nervously twisting her fingers. Evidently she had been away from the place, for she was wearing one of those grotesque bead bonnets with a sort of little black whisk-broom sticking up from it, such as are traditional with elderly British servants.

"Well, Mrs. Mullion," I said. "What's the matter?"

She told a long incoherent story, the gist of which seemed to be that the afternoon before she and Mullion had had a telephone message summoning them over to Huntington to see her sister, who was said to be very ill. When they arrived, the sister wasn't ill at all, but being there, they thought they would make a party of it. So they had stayed overnight; and then Mullion had gone with his brother-in-law to sample some

home-brewed spirits—in short, they had got back only an hour before. Going up to the house to see that everything was all right, they found the storeroom had been robbed. The shelves were in disorder, and a lot of groceries had vanished. Warming to her theme, she began to enumerate the provisions that had been taken. “Oh, sir,” she cried, “all that fine Darjeeling tea, and the evaporated milk, and the Cooper’s Oxford marmalade and Bath Oliver biscuits and anchovy paste. All the special supplies you keeps for your fishing trips——”

I cut her short. Carmichael and I made a tour of the house. Everything, except the store-room, was in perfect order, just as I had left it in June.

“This doesn’t look to me like burglary,” said Carmichael. “The swiping of the food is merely incidental.”

“I trust the Mullions absolutely,” I said. “They’re not powerful thinkers, but they’re honest.”

“Well, maybe they were lured away, on purpose to leave the house unguarded. I’ll bet the girls were got over here, on some pretext or other, and then seized.”

This seemed to me—like most of Tom’s ideas—a bit too melodramatic to be probable. But certainly the telephone call mentioned by Mrs.

Mullion sounded (not intending a pun) distinctly phony.

"We'd better have the Blackstone man here at once," said Tom. "I'll telephone to the school."

He ran to the instrument in the hall. I heard him rattling the hook, and then he began to growl.

"That's just the way!" he cried. "There's no answer. The thing's out of order. Everything always goes wrong at once!"

It was true. There was no hum in the receiver. The instrument was dead.

I had a queer feeling that all this was unreal, and that we were acting in a kind of play; for at that moment two glaring lenses shone on the roadway, there was a soft crunch of gravel, and a big car pulled up at the door. Into the hall hurried, in a state of anxious excitement, the last person I would ever have expected to see dishevelled or upset. It was Bradway, the extremely discreet and unemotional valet of old Mr. Crockett, one of my neighbours along the Sound.

"Pardon me, Mr. Kennedy," he said, "but is Mr. Crockett here?"

"Mr. Crockett!" I exclaimed. "Why, no, Bradway, I've only been here a few minutes myself. Is anything wrong?"

In spite of his distress, Bradway did not forget that he was a gentleman's gentleman, and his language was precise.

"Mr. Crockett has vanished, sir," he said. "He has not been seen since dinner-time last night. God only knows—I beg pardon, sir, I should say, *I* have not been able to find any trace of him."

It is hardly necessary to describe my sensations on hearing this. As you know, the disappearance of the President of the United States would hardly be more disconcerting. Old Alexander J. Crockett—familiarily known as "the richest man in the world"—had been a lifelong friend of my father, and I had known him since my boyhood. He was one of those personalities that are remarkable enough in themselves, but become almost fabulous by reason of the interest the press takes in their doings and appearance. Old Crockett's lean dwarfish figure, his bald head with the skull cap, his hawk nose and cunning humorous eye, were a favourite (but rarely caught) subject of the newspaper photographers. He was the head of an international banking house quite as powerful as (and a good deal more trustworthy than) most European governments; a shrewd and extremely entertaining old gentleman of seventy whose interests and responsibilities ran all over the globe; who avoided publicity

like the plague, but whose inside knowledge of world affairs was probably greater than that of any living statesman. He lived, with his daughter Mrs. Ferry, in a vast mansion on Swanakha Cove, a few miles beyond Barclay's Inlet.

"What made you think he might be here?" I asked. "I only got home from abroad this morning."

"He went off with Miss Pandora," was Bradway's reply.

Carmichael and I stared at each other in sincere amazement. Of all possible combinations of circumstance, this was the oddest. Had Pandora and her schoolmates been kidnapped simultaneously by a young romantic socialist and an old hard-headed financier? Bradway was equally startled at our perplexity.

"Tell me all you can," I said, "and then I'll explain our side of it."

"Last evening, just before dinner," said Bradway, "I was with Mr. Crockett—he had just put on his evening clothes; and as a matter of fact he was giving me what for, because I had ordered a new dress suit for him; you know, sir, he is very thrifty about such matters. A message came upstairs that Miss Pandora Kennedy wanted to see him. Miss Pandora is a great favourite with Mr. Crockett, and he chuckled and went right down. As he left the room he

said to me, 'You see, Bradway, the ladies are still interested in me even if I *don't* have any new clothes.' Well, sir, that was the last I saw of him. Mrs. Ferry says that he and Miss Pandora had a chat together, and both seemed in high spirits, and she understood him to say they were going out to dinner together. Mrs. Ferry begged Miss Pandora to stay to dinner, but she would not do so. At any rate, Mr. Crockett put on his hat and coat and said he would be gone for two or three hours, and Miss Pandora said she would take good care of him. They walked off in the garden, in the dark, and that was the last of it. Well, sir, you know how Mr. Crockett hates to be run after, and when he didn't come home we supposed he was spending the night over here. We tried to get you on the telephone, but Central told us your wire was out of order. I came here the first thing this morning, but nobody was about. I *was* worried then, but Mrs. Ferry still thought the old gentleman was off somewhere with Miss Pandora, and was afraid to make too many inquiries."

I could understand this, for old Crockett was of a domineering temper, particularly in his own household; nothing infuriated him more than to think that he was being looked after or restrained in any way.

"We haven't seen him since," concluded Brad-

way. And then, with a show of emotion that did him credit, for he was deeply attached to his eccentric old employer, "My God, Mr. Kennedy, what are we to *do*? We've been keeping this quiet, for fear of the papers, but Mrs. Ferry is nearly crazy. She wants you to come over right away, if you will, and advise her."

Then I told Bradway that Pandora herself was missing, and not only Pandora but six other girls and one of their teachers too.

"It's those Reds, sir," he said tremulously. "You've no idea how many threatening letters come to Mr. Crockett, from crazy people who only know him by hearsay. You remember the awful explosion in Wall Street; I always thought that was aimed at him. Of course he doesn't see the letters, but his secretary tells me about them. And those young girls too. Oh, it's terrible."

"There's only one thing to do," I said. "Tom, you drive back to the school and tell the Blackstone man what we've learned. I'll hurry over to Swanakha Cove to see Mrs. Ferry. She saw Pandora, and may know more than Bradway has told us. Call me up at Mr. Crockett's house after you've talked with the detective."

"Mr. Crockett's car is waiting outside," said Bradway. "You'll come back with me, sir?"

"I think we can do better than that," I said. "It's sixteen miles round to Swanakha by road,

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and we can't make time through those woods. You have to go all the way round the inlet and the cove. It's only five miles by water. We'll do better to go by boat. Mullion, is the *Pandora* all shipshape?"

The unhappy Mullion, whose face was deeply engraved with shame and discomfiture, was glad to find one question that he could answer properly.

"Yes, sir," he said; "I've kept her in trim all summer."

Carmichael was already off in his car—I could see his red tail-light disappearing into the woods. I sent Mullion down to the dock to light the lamps and have the yacht ready for a start. The *Pandora* is my idea of a handy boat. She's a forty-foot sloop, very broad and roomy, with a large cabin and a galley. I had her fitted out according to my own ideas, for cruising and fishing trips; she has a tiny little stateroom with two bunks; the settees in the cabin give sleeping room for three; and there are two bunks forward in the little focsle adjoining the galley. She's surprisingly easy to handle, for though the main sheet is heavy, I rigged a little windlass for the halliards. Two can manage her in almost any weather—in fact, Pandora and I had been through some heavy blows on the Sound without trouble. In the well under the companion

ladder there's a 24 h.p. motor—she can cruise twelve miles an hour on her own power. I had told Mullion to keep her in sailing trim during my absence so that he could take Pandora out if she cared to go. He was an experienced waterman, and sometimes Pandora liked to bring her friends over to the Inlet for a sail.

I left Bradway and Mrs. Mullion fidgeting in the hall while I ran upstairs for a hasty adjustment to the problem. I had come straight from the ship without my baggage and not very suitably clad for pursuing kidnappers. I hurried into an old suit of golfing tweeds and put a revolver and flashlight in my pockets. With these and plenty of tobacco I felt prepared for anything. From my bedroom windows I could see Mullion's lantern down at the dock. It was a beautiful night, moonless, clear, and still: the lights on the Connecticut shore were plainly visible.

As I came downstairs Mullion burst into the house through the front door.

"She's not there!" he cried hoarsely.

I couldn't believe him at first, and ran down to the water. It was true—the *Pandora* was gone from her moorings. I had Crockett's chauffeur bring his car down on the dock, and we swept the beach with his lights, for I thought she might have chafed her line and drifted ashore. There was no sign of her.

"She was here when I left, yesterday," protested Mullion, almost in tears. "I know, because I said to my Missis I thought I'd better give her spars a new coat of varnish——"

But I had no time to listen to further lamentations. Mrs. Mullion was crying out that she believed it was all "them bootleggers."

"There's a lot of them rum-smugglers prowlin' about the water," she said. "It's my belief they've stole the food and the boat too."

"If you knew there were bootleggers about," I said angrily, "why did you go away and leave the place?"

But it was something more serious than booze contrabanders, I began to fear. The yacht and the pilfering of stores were more or less understandable; but the girls and old Crockett—what would rum-running have to do with them? What a home-coming! I said to myself—Pandora gone, six other girls and their teacher gone, Mr. Crockett gone, the sloop gone——

"Come," I said to Bradway. "There's nothing to be done here. We'll get over to Swanakha as fast as possible."

IV

Old Crockett's enormous château is always intensely amusing to me. What was that snail or shellfish one of the poets wrote about, that

kept on building mansions yet more vast? The Chambered Nautilus, wasn't it? Well, the Crockett place is like that—an observant eye can trace in it, like geological strata, the gradual accretions of the Crockett fortune. Wings, galleries and terraces, added from time to time as the old man fell under the dominion of some ecstatic architect or decorator, exhibit all styles of ornamental cheer from the period of Rutherford B. Hayes to our own. The hall is baronial, with suits of armour and bearskin rugs on a stone floor; the drawing-room is in the approved style of Waldorf-Astoria French—gilt spider-leg chairs and brocade upholstery. But on this occasion I had no leisure to savour the humours of the establishment. I found Mrs. Ferry just finishing dinner: a little black-gowned weasel of a woman with a sharp face and bright busy eyes. She is very much in awe of her imperative old father, but I have always regarded her as a highly capable person. She exhibited strong good sense: insisted on my sitting down and having something to eat. This was very welcome, for I had had an early lunch on the *Aquitania* and nothing since. She had the dishes laid out on the table in front of me, and then dismissed the servants.

I wanted to get her story with as little agitation as possible, so I withheld the news about Pandora and the other girls until she had finished.

But she added little or nothing to what Bradway had told me.

"I was reading the evening paper," she said, "and waiting for Father to come down to dinner. Pandora burst in, lively and charming as usual. She wore a khaki knickerbocker suit, and with her red tam, her bobbed head and her gay mischievous air she seemed a kind of boyish Peter Pan. She asked if I would mind her taking Father off for dinner. She said that her literary club was having a party at your house, that one of the teachers was going to be there, and she wanted Mr. Crockett to come along as guest of honour. Well, I didn't see any harm in this: you know how fond Father is of her, he always enjoys their larks together. As he came downstairs he called out to her, and she ran into the hall to speak to him. I heard them laughing together, and then they came back to the library. They were a comical picture, arm in arm, Father in his old-fashioned evening dress and Pandora in her boy clothes; but Father seemed so full of spirits I didn't dare protest. I begged Pandora to sit down to dinner with us, but she said that the other girls were waiting for them.

"We mustn't disappoint the Literary Club," said Father. Pandora ran out and got his coat and scarf, helped him into them, and off they went. You know what a way she has with her!

Well, I didn't think much about it one way or another until towards midnight. Then I began to get anxious, and tried to get Barclay's Inlet on the phone. Central said your wire was out of order. Bradway wanted to drive over, but I thought that Father was probably enjoying himself, and it upsets him so to be run after. I supposed he was spending the night at your house, and I remembered that one of Miss Van Velsor's mistresses was there too."

"One of the teachers," I said—"but not one of the mistresses." And I told her the full story in so far as I knew it.

"Great heavens!" she said. "I called up Miss Van Velsor this morning and asked to speak to Pandora. Miss Van Velsor said that Pandora had gone to town to study the pictures at the Museum. She said nothing at all about the other girls. And I didn't mention my alarm about Father."

She moved her chair closer to me.

"There's another aspect of this business that you may not realize, Mr. Kennedy. Washington has been trying all day long to get Father on the telephone. You know that new Armament Conference meets down there very soon, and the Secretary of the Treasury wants Father for some financial discussion or other, about international loans. Also the Wall Street office has

been calling up. Mr. Bealings, Father's secretary, has been wonderfully discreet, but you know how it is. We can't put those people off indefinitely. Even if we only tell them he has a cold, it's likely to get into the papers, and there'll be reporters out here to find out what kind of a cold it is. Of course there's only one thing that takes precedence over Finance and International Politics, and they all understand that. Mr. Bealings has told them that Father is playing golf, and refused to be disturbed. But even golf can't be played in the dark."

In spite of her touch of humour I could see that she was deeply agitated. Her keen dry little face was close to mine, and her shoe-button eyes were troubled.

"Mr. Kennedy," she said, "I'm afraid something dreadful has happened. You probably don't know how many threatening letters Father gets, and specially just now, when all the papers have been printing that he is going to have a hand in the Armament Conference. Father himself doesn't know it. But every man on the estate is armed. Now whoever is an enemy of Father's would be an enemy also of those girls. There they all were, quite without protection."

"Except Gloucester Evans," I said.

"A poet, and a kind of sentimental crank. Besides, what could one man do? I tell you, I am

horribly alarmed. Father is obstinate and queer, but he'd never go off like this of his own accord without letting me know where he was. Especially just now, when publicity would have such dangerous effects. Suppose someone rings up from Washington and says he is coming here to consult Father? What can I say? I tell you, I sit here just trembling for fear of a telephone call. And those lovely girls——"

At this moment, with excellent dramatic effect, the butler entered.

"Pardon, Madam," he said, "a gentleman is calling Mr. Kennedy on the telephone."

It was Tom Carmichael.

"One of Blackstone's men is here," he said, speaking very fast. "He's positive it's Reds. Well, I guess this kind of thing will teach those boobs in Washington not to scrap all their battleships yet awhile. Blackstone himself will be out later. This fellow has been grilling Miss Van Velsor's gardeners. He doesn't like the look of that tam-o'-shanter business. It was red, you see? Do you get that? Blackstone wants to know if it was really Pandora's, or maybe it was some kind of emblem. Lots of Italian anarchists wear tam-o'-shanters."

"Don't worry about that," I said. "I gave it to Pandora myself, last spring."

"Well, anyhow, Blackstone's going to cover

the clues on land. He wants to check up the taxi that Pandora hired to go and call for Crockett. Also Mrs. Mullion's brother-in-law. There's something queer about that. Meanwhile, he wants us to follow the shore line and see what's become of your boat. The disappearance of the sloop may be only a blind. But we can cover the water end of it mighty quickly. They've only been gone twenty-four hours. I'll get out my F-boat. Just as soon as it gets light we'll hop off."

I was about to demur, but then reflected that I would prefer airplaning with Tom to riding in his car. Fewer chances of collision, at any rate.

"Now, listen," he continued. "We can't afford to lose a minute. I'm going over to the landing to get the ship. You run down to Crockett's dock and see what there is in the way of a searchlight on his yacht. Have it turned on and shoot it straight up in the air so I can find his place."

"But surely," I said, "you can't fly in the dark? You'll——"

"You watch me. Just throw up a beam with that searchlight, and turn any other lamps you can out over the harbour. I can come down on the water like a cat landing on its feet. I'll be there in half an hour."

He rang off.

I told Mrs. Ferry what Tom's plan was, and perhaps expressed a little more confidence in it than I really felt. I also urged her not to be too painfully worried, but I admit that her remarks on old Crockett's connection with the Washington Conference had given me a lot to think about. The world is in a mighty disturbed state nowadays; there are a lot of hands that move much faster than the brains that actuate them; and a contemplative observer is only too aware that almost anything may happen. Knowing as I did that old Crockett, behind his pungent materialism, is a mighty public-spirited citizen, and knowing something of his intelligent desire to leave human finances a little better stabilized than he found them, I thought it would be the height of irony if now, at the very preface of his most valuable achievement, some maniacs had done anything desperate. And as for Pandora and the other girls, you can guess if I was anxious. I thought of Pandora as she had been, a tawny-haired little mischief seven years old, when she first came to live with me. She had told me, quite soberly, that her Daddy and Mother had gone away on a ship and that Uncle Melville would have to take care of her. "I'll try to be good," she said, "but I better not promise." And only too often, I reflected, Uncle Melville himself had gone away on a ship and

left her to governesses. I thought of her, in childhood summers at Barclay's Inlet, a sleek little mermaid in a boy's bathing suit, her skin gilded by the sun, tossing the water from her hair, wilful, affectionate, and even as a child so unpredictably feminine.

Mrs. Ferry telephoned to the dock for Captain Tastrom, who came up to the house. Tastrom had charge of Crockett's steam yacht, the *Minnerva*, which the old gentleman very rarely used. I explained matters to him, and we went down to the pier together. The searchlight on top of the wheelhouse was switched on and thrown vertically upward as Tom had asked. We also had three big cars run down from the garage, onto the pier, and their headlights were directed out across the water. When this was done I took a dinghy and rowed out into the harbour to see if the lights were too dazzling. I supposed that Tom would take the water pretty far out and taxi in toward the landing; and I guessed that if the illumination was too closely parallel with the water it would blind him. I shouted to Tastrom to back the cars a little so the light would lift higher. While the shafts of brightness were swinging about me I noticed something shining in the water. It bobbed close alongside the dinghy, and I reached over and picked it up. It was an empty ginger ale bottle,

tightly capped, and inside it a roll of paper. I knocked off the head of the bottle against a row-lock, and took out the slip. It was a sheet of my own notepaper that I kept on the *Pandora*, with the North Shore Yacht Club pennant engraved in colours. On it was a pencil scrawl, in an unformed hand:

*Latitude Long Island Longitude Swanakha,
treasure aboard and pirats in pursuit.
Course eastward great danger. P. P. P.*

But I hardly had time to consider this at the moment, for just then I heard the drone of Tom's engine. We saw his plane, outlined darkly against the clear sprinkle of stars. He passed overhead, flying quite low, the vertical beam of the searchlight brightening the underbody of his plane, which shone for an instant like a great pearly gull. I rowed hurriedly ashore, for I had no desire to be run down when he came skittering in. He flew a long way out over the Sound, to be sure of his bearings, I suppose, then we heard the increasing buzz of the motor. In the converging brightness of the automobile lamps we saw him dip down and come foaming across the dark bay. It was beautifully done, and I couldn't help admiring the skilful young rascal. I suddenly realized why Pandora had enjoyed flying with him. But just as I was thinking the land-

ing had been a complete success I heard Tastrom utter an exclamation. We had forgotten the *Minerva's* mooring buoy, which lay outside the sector of water lit by our lamps. Apparently Tom found the glare too dazzling and steered off to one side. Then, turning inward again to avoid fouling the buoy, he slid rippling over the water and just touched the end of the pier. The impact was so slight that I suspected nothing wrong, but in the quiet that followed the stopping of his engine we heard him cursing heartily. He had broken a wing-tip and snapped two stays.

Tom seemed to consider this accident entirely my fault, and was quite savage about it. He said we had arranged the lights all wrong and dazzled him. It would take a skilled mechanic and a day's work to repair the damage, he said; and we couldn't risk the delay. To divert his mind from the unlucky mishap I hastened to show him the bottle message. He gazed at it angrily. To my surprise he didn't have any immediate solution to offer.

"Well," he said at last, "what do *you* think?"

"I don't know what to think," I said. "I'm almost inclined to suspect some sort of hoax."

"A pretty damnable hoax!" he cried. "No, I think it's a mighty clever stunt. Those kidnappers, or bolshevists, or whatever they are, have chucked this out to give us a wrong steer.

They're clever. They've got Crockett and the girls on the *Pandora*, the notepaper shows that. They say they're going east, because they think then our first thought will be to go east. And then, they say to themselves, the pursuers will be suspicious and go west instead. They want us to go west. The double bluff is always the trick—we'll go east, just as we planned. Look at the handwriting and the soiled paper. There's villainy in that writing if ever I saw it. I shouldn't wonder if Evans wrote it himself."

"At any rate Evans would write a more cultivated fist than that," I said. "And his hands wouldn't be so dirty. After all, he's a Harvard man."

Tom looked at me crossly. "It's all carefully doped out," he said. "P. P. P., I suppose, is some code for his particular soviet. Anyhow, they know we're after them—that 'pirats in pursuit' shows that."

I still believed that to explore by water was our best manœuvre. This would give us a chance to examine all the coves and harbours along the shore. But Tom insisted it was too slow. He said we had lost too much time already: we must go off at daylight in one of Crockett's cars. In that way we could cover all the towns quickly: the sloop might have put into one of them for water, gasoline, or food.

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By the time Tom had moored his plane it was after ten. He would have started at once, but I insisted on a few hours' sleep. We could accomplish nothing in the middle of the night, and any inquiries so conducted would only arouse talk. Mrs. Ferry, Bradway, Bealings, Tom, and I held a council, and also consulted Blackstone and Miss Van Velsor over the wire. It was agreed that Tom and I would go off at sunrise, and all concerned would report to Mrs. Ferry by telephone.

v

It was a Wednesday morning when Tom and I left Swanakha, driving one of Mr. Crockett's cars—a glassed-in roadster. The smaller the car, we thought, the easier for us, if our course took us off the beaten track. There is no need to recall the details of that weary and discouraging day. One after another we visited every village on the North shore east from Swanakha. In each town we went first to the water front and swept the harbour with binoculars to see if the *Pandora* was there. We inquired at yacht clubs and water-side gasoline stations. Then we went to the leading drugstores and soda fountains and made cautious inquiries. It was my idea that if the girls had landed at any of these towns the drug-store was the first place they would visit—for

sundaes if they were well, or for medicine if they were ill. I felt fairly certain that so large and oddly assorted a party, if they had landed at all, would be easy to trace. But nowhere did we find the slightest encouragement. Carmichael, growing more and more anxious, was for confiding in the various village constables, but I doubted their powers of secrecy. Once the news was in their possession there was no telling how quickly it would spread to the front pages of newspapers. The lonely parts of the shore we made no attempt to explore: Blackstone had agreed to reconnoitre them with a launch.

It was growing dark when we drove into Eastern Point, the last settlement of any size on the northern slope of the island. Long Island, as is well known, terminates in two long spits, like the flukes of a whale. Eastern Point is a picturesque weatherbeaten town, once of considerable importance in old whaling days, but now much decayed and faded from its former prosperity. There is a fine harbour, at the apex of that great land-locked bay which lies between the two eastern tails of the island. In summer time the town and its water are lively with vacation visitors; but now, I knew, the big hotel would be closed for the winter.

We both rode into the town in a bad temper. We had approached it not on a main road, but

along a rough byway. We had been out to the end of the northern promontory to interview the lighthouse keeper. He had seen nothing of the *Pandora*, and we were tired and worried. We had an uncomfortable feeling that we were on a fools' errand: that there would have been some better way to go about our task; and yet we did not know just what else we could have done to safeguard all the delicacies involved. Tom, particularly, was irritated because, as we drove along the narrow sandy track among pine woods, we suddenly found ourselves behind a huge motor truck which blocked the whole road. There was no way of passing the thing, and though Tom honked and alternately blazed and dimmed his lights, the lumbering vehicle ground heavily along in front of us. Indeed, there was no way it could turn aside, and we had to creep on as patiently as we could, watching the sand trickling off the broad solid tires a few feet ahead.

"I wonder where the devil this thing is coming from," Tom said at last. "What the deuce do they carry out here on this sandspit? It can't have been to the lighthouse with supplies or we'd have passed it on the way there. It can't be vegetables—there aren't any out here in the dunes. Bootleggers, I suppose. Well, I'd forgive them anything for a good bottle of Scotch. We'll need it to-night. The darn thing's made

us so late, it'll be too dark to see the boats in the harbour at Eastern Point."

I was too morose to reply. My chief anxiety was to get to a telephone and find out from Mrs. Ferry whether Blackstone had reported anything. At last we gained a broader road, the heavy canvas-draped camion pulled aside, and we shot past with an embittered yelp of the horn from Tom.

It was, as Tom had predicted, too dark to study the harbour. On the main street, close to the water, we found a garage, and here we turned in the car to be served with oil and gas. As we looked about it became evident that the garage was more than an isolated enterprise. A large sign read:

JERICHO MCGOWAN
GARAGE AND SHIPYARD
LIGHT AND HEAVY HAULING
BOATS FOR HIRE

Behind the garage a series of sheds and out-houses ran down to the water, where we could see launches and sailboats drawn up for the winter. What struck me was the number of large trucks and vans standing about. It seemed odd that in this remote part of the island there should be so large a traffic in moving vans.

"Is there a hotel in town where we can get a

room?" I asked a surly fellow who was pouring oil into our engine.

"Jerry's place, round the corner," he said.

Jerry's place proved to be "McGowan's Hotel," an ugly but pretentious wooden building with a dingy sign still carrying the gilded capricorn emblematic of bock beer; but the actual word *BEER* had been blacked out. Entering through the front door we found a large sitting room. At one end a counter, a rolltop desk and some tiers of pigeonholes for mail seemed to indicate the office. Behind the counter a large stout reddish man in shirtsleeves and vest, smoking a cigar, was talking to two or three rather noisy loiterers. He looked us over attentively as we approached. The air was bitter with cheap cigar smoke; it seemed to me that there were also other tinctures in the aroma.

"Can we get a room here?" I asked.

He surveyed us quite placidly, without either hospitality or rebuff.

"We're pretty full just now," he said. "Better register, and I'll see what I can do. Maybe I can shift someone around." But instead of the greasy old album that lay on the desk behind him, he pushed forward a blank sheet of paper. This amused me, it was so transparent.

"You register," I said to Tom. "I want to telephone."

I looked round for a booth, but didn't see any.

"You can put it through here," said McGowan, pointing to an instrument against the wall. He went to a small switchboard behind the desk. "What number d'you want?"

Naturally I had no intention of telephoning to Mrs Ferry there in public with McGowan and the loafers listening in.

"Hullo!" I exclaimed, improvising an excuse. "Tom, I've left the road map in the car. Before I call up Shinnecock I want to see how long it'll take us to get there." I skipped out and went down the street until I found a drugstore. There I called Mrs. Ferry. She spoke with restraint, but I could realize she was in great misery. There had been no news of any sort. Blackstone had 'phoned twice, but had found no clues. He had promised to report again later.

"Tom and I are at McGowan's Hotel, Eastern Point," I said. "So far we've had no luck whatever. We'll have to stay here till the morning because we've had no chance to look over the boats in the harbour. If there's any news at all, ring me up at McGowan's. But don't tell me anything while I'm there. Say something inconsequential. Then I'll skip out and ring you up from the drugstore. McGowan's is evidently the village gossiping centre, the 'phone is out in the public lobby, and I don't want to take any chances."

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I went back to the hotel. I was annoyed by McGowan's calm insolence in hesitating to give us a room. The place had all the earmarks of a bootlegging joint, and I couldn't help being amused at the idea that McGowan suspected us to be revenue agents. So much the better, I thought: with that conviction fixed in his mind he would be less likely to tumble to our real quest.

I found Tom studying a map of Long Island that was framed against the wall. He seemed more cheerful. But I doubted his delicacy in dissimulation, and wondered what he had been saying to McGowan.

"This bird thinks we're rum raiders," he whispered. "That's why he's so cagy. You know that big truck that held us up on the road. It drove in here just now, to the garage back of the house. Full of hootch, I'll bet. McGowan's scared stiff: he's trying to figure us out. If we can convince him we're on the square he'd probably come across with some real stuff."

I was looking at the map. It had suddenly occurred to me that the indented bays and lonely coves round about Eastern Point were the most promising of all Long Island waters for any business requiring concealment.

"Let's keep him thinking," I said. "Just as long as he'll give us a room for the night, I don't

care what he does. He looks to me like a pretty smooth specimen. Did you ever see a more evidently illicit place than this? Did you notice all the lemonade and root beer bottles piled up on the old bar over there? That's so delightfully obvious, it'd make even a revenooer suspicious."

I strolled over to consult McGowan again. When I described him as "stout" I didn't say quite enough. He was fleshy, but there was an air of agility about him. He moved lightly on his feet and did everything very softly. When, for instance, he laid an ink bottle on the counter he put it down noiselessly. He was in shirt-sleeves, but his shirt was of silk and immaculate. He wore no collar, but his face was shaven to a satin smoothness. His air was irritatingly off-hand, his gaze dwelt pensively upon one, then floated off in a meditative way. He gave a curious impression of being very busy in his mind. I was struck by a sense of constant and yet orderly movement going on around him. Men were dropping in, chatting a few moments at his counter, then going away. To these visitors he addressed casual remarks, mostly in a vein of tranquil sarcasm, without removing his cigar. I have had experience with men of all sorts, and this fellow impressed me at once as a type characteristic of Big Business. When I saw his hand

move gently under the counter and press a push-button, I was reminded of some of my friends on Lower Broadway who sit at mahogany desks with plate-glass tops and perform the same gesture.

"Can we get supper here?" I asked.

"Sure," he said. "Try the chowder. Got a big truckload of clams, fresh from the mud this afternoon. I send 'em in to the city every day."

"How's the duck season this year?"

"Pretty good, I guess."

"Got any boats to rent? I thought maybe my friend and I would go out for a sail to-morrow, take a look round."

His eye beamed thoughtfully upon a lithographed calendar in which he seemed to find a sudden gentle interest.

"I dunno," he said. "Some of 'em's laid up for winter, mostly the others hired a'ready. Have to see."

His evasions were so plain that I began to find them agreeable. Tom and I went into the dining room. Rather to my surprise, it was clean and not ill served. There were only half a dozen people eating, which gave the lie to McGowan's report of a full house. But the chowder was thick, hot, and properly pungent. As an old boatman of mine used to say, who fancied himself as a chowder chef, it had "all the documents

in it." By which he meant, condiments. We were finishing supper when McGowan came to the door of the dining room and shouted, "Call for Mr. Kennedy!" I laid down my napkin and was about to rise when Tom halted me.

"Ye gods," he said, "I forgot to tell you. You're not Kennedy here. Your name is pretty well-known on the island, so I registered us as Tom Waterman and Melville Black. I took the name off McGowan's ink bottle."

So we sat tight. After finishing our coffee, without apparent haste, we strolled off into the village and I hurried to the drugstore. I rang Mrs. Ferry.

"Oh," she said. "I *am* glad to get you. I've just heard from Blackstone. The lighthouse keeper near Port Jefferson found a bottle on the beach this afternoon. It had a message in it, very ill-written, just like the one you found here."

I made her spell it to me exactly. It ran thus:

*Lattitude Long Island Longitude Wading River treasure
all safe and mutinneers under hatches. J. J. A. sets
course Thatchers Island. Terible danger. P. P. P.*

"Well," I said to Tom, "unless this is a hoax of some sort, it looks as though we'd come in the right direction. Thatcher's Island—why

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that's right out here in the bay, eight or ten miles off shore. We'd better get over there as quick as we can."

"I don't think it's a hoax," said Tom. "If that was found near Port Jefferson, then obviously they *were* going east, just as I said. But I wish I could dope out this P. P. P. stuff. Some Black Hand society, I dare say."

"Very black hands," I suggested, pulling out the first bottle-message, which was in my wallet. "Look at those finger-prints."

A little chaff always made Tom indignant.

"Yes," he cried, "those finger-prints'll bring some scoundrel to the chair, I dare say. If only the plane was here it wouldn't take us ten minutes to get to that island."

I was interested to find Thatcher's Island mentioned, because it's one of the most romantic places in our region. I had never set foot on it but had often heard Angus Huntington talk about it. Huntington leases it, merely for sporting purposes, from the heirs of the original Thatchers, who held it as a manor direct from the crown in the Seventeenth Century. Huntington has been abroad the last year or so, but before that he always used to have a gunning party on the island every fall. There are lots of ducks and pheasants, and even a few deer. On the island (it's about ten miles long and five wide)

you can still make out the overgrown foundations of the Seventeenth Century manor, which was once visited by the original Captain Kidd. It is not mere legend, but actual history, that Kidd anchored off the island in his sloop-of-war, when pursued by a frigate. He compelled the Thatcher of that time to pay tribute in the form of venison and casks of cider, and he also cached some chests of treasure. As in all that eastern end of Long Island, there has been a persistent tradition that some buccaneer's gold was still buried there. Anyhow, the island is unique in its picturesque associations, and Huntington has been careful not to spoil its charm. It is quite a little wilderness, and except for a rough hunting lodge and a small pier has been untouched by improvement. A keeper lives in the lodge to prevent any poaching. Huntington had several times invited me to his shooting parties there, but I had never been able to go. One thought struck me, however: Huntington was extremely strict about his preserve, and regarded the island as his particular pride. I remembered his telling me that Hutchins, his keeper, had imperative orders to prevent strangers from landing.

As I told this to Carmichael we were walking down to the water front of the town to get the general topography in mind. On the main street the movie and the shop windows were brightly

lit, but along the harbour everything was dark and silent. There was a quiet lap of water among the old mossy rotting wharves, where once Long Island's whaling ships had unloaded their casks of oil. An occasional schooner with lumber from Down East, or some millionaire's dainty steam yacht, are the only sizable craft Eastern Point sees nowadays. It was a lovely clear night, with a lingering softness of summer in the air, and yet also a moist breath that seemed to me to prophesy a coming change. I am rather a connoisseur of weather, and I noticed that the air, which tasted mild and drowsy to the mouth, carried a cool dampness when it reached the lungs.

All the boatyards were shut. But the dark silence of the harbour was broken in one place. McGowan's garage, facing the water, was brightly lit, a number of cars and trucks stood about, and there were also lights burning at a near-by wharf. After looking in at the garage to see if our roadster had been safely housed, we went to the dock. There was a shed smelling of paints and varnish, and a string of flat punts and row-boats tied up to a jetty. We found a man in overalls and carrying a bucket of paint coming out of the shed.

"Any chance to hire a boat round here?" I asked.

He looked at us rather queerly.

"Not at night," he said. "You'll have to see McGowan."

"I don't mean at night; I just want to engage something for to-morrow. My friend and I want to explore the bay a bit."

He accepted my cigar.

"Jerry'd ought to be able to let you have something," he said more genially.

"You fellows seem pretty busy round here. I should think at night was an odd time to paint."

"Jerry's a queer dick," he said. "When he wants anything done it's got to be done quick." He moved off as though he had said more than he intended.

We strolled round the corner of the wharf and looked down idly at a slip where three men were at work under a couple of powerful arcs, painting and carpentering a good-sized boat. Her deck was a muddle of ropes and gear; from the cabin came a sound of hammering on metal. Her hull was painted dark green, and I was just thinking that the colour tended to obscure the real beauty of her sheer. Then my eye fell upon a little ratchet windlass at the foot of the mast. There was no mistaking this, for it was my own contrivance. I went hot all over. It was the *Pandora*.

VI

My first impulse, one of pure anger, was to hail the workmen and ask them what in thunder they were doing with my boat. And indeed the ejaculation was almost out of my mouth, but I checked it. The men tinkering with the sloop were probably mere tools in the affair. I said nothing to Tom, who was only too liable to outbursts of vehemence. Quietly I edged nearer along the dock. You can guess whether I was angry when I saw the condition the *Pandora* was in. Her pretty teak deck was stained with the green paint that had been hastily slapped on her; the brass letters of her name had been screwed off her stern; the mahogany wheel had been unshipped; the cabin stripped of cushions and curtains; the white woodwork was being painted brown, and her canvas had already been removed. Under the companion I could hear someone chipping at the engine. It needed all my self-control not to raise an outcry.

"Well, boys," I said, "nice-looking boat you got here."

They looked up in surprise. They had been too busy to hear us approach. The painter whom we had spoken to before muttered something, the others did not reply.

"Just the kind of boat I'd like to hire," I said. "How soon'll she be fixed up?"

"McGowan only got her yesterday," said one of the men. "He bought her off somebody over to Bayport. He's remodelling her for himself."

The devil he is! I thought to myself.

"I guess you don't mind if I come aboard," I remarked, and was about to jump down onto her deck.

"Wait a minute, chief," said one of the men. "This here's private property. McGowan gave us orders not to let any one on her."

"Nonsense!" Tom exclaimed. He was unaware of the true situation, but any sort of prohibition was always a red rag to his vigorous nature. "We just want to have a look at her." He put his hand on the stay and was about to swing down onto the cabin roof. One of the workmen, a big swarthy fellow, scrambled up from the cockpit, evidently quite ready for a fight. I saw that it was time for finesse, and pinched Tom's arm.

"Orders are orders," I said. "It's McGowan's boat, if he doesn't want strangers aboard he's got a right to say so."

We walked back to the hotel, and I told Tom that the boat we had seen was the *Pandora*. He was greatly excited, and I myself admitted this seemed to prove that the Thatcher's Island clue

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was a likely one. Tom insisted that I ought to call in the town constable and seize the boat by force, if necessary.

"No," I said, "that's not our game. In the first place it's fairly evident that McGowan's got the village sewed up tight. You can tell by the behaviour of these workmen that he's already tipped them off to give us no help. Very likely the cop would be the same. I'll settle scores with him later about the *Pandora*. Now, we've got to let him play his hand onto the table until we can size him up. The first thing we've got to do is to get across to that island and find out what's going on. If we wait till morning he'll have every boat owner in town warned against us. They think we're Federal agents, and these fellows have no love for such. We'll have to slip out later and steal a boat somehow."

We found McGowan a little more affable. News of our disappointment at the dock had evidently penetrated to him. This time, feeling that he had successfully discouraged us, he seemed to think it best to appear cordial.

"I've found a room for you," he said. "A guest just checked out. And mebbe in the morning I can find a boat for you, if you want some fishing. The only trouble is to get a man to go along. My fellows are all pretty busy. This is our big season, shipping clams to the city. I

don't like to send strangers out without a boatman who knows the bay. They's some pretty bad water between here and Thatcher's Island."

I was amused by the legible cunning of his little scheme. It was a temptation to tell him that probably I knew those tidal currents almost as well as he. The *Pandora* had often sailed them.

"Take a day off and come with us yourself," I said, adopting an air of man-to-man geniality.

He was rather disarmed by this suggestion—or at any rate pretended to be.

"Well, say!" he cried. "I'd like to, sure! A good day on the water, and fishing tackle or a gun—that's me, Jericho McGowan! You know why they call me that? I was raised down to Jericho, near the old cider mill. But mebbe you gents is strangers to the Island? Anyhow, being raised handy to the old cider mill, I got that stuff kind of in my blood, I guess. It's the only drink I care fer. I wouldn't give a damn for all the hootch between here and Montreal."

"But how about the hootch between here and Brooklyn?" said Tom. I was afraid that this unguarded remark might startle the man, but he took it, so to speak, in his stride.

"Ah, that's a different story! I dare say there's a lot of it, too. But chowder and cider's my hobbies. I wish I *could* take a day off with you gentlemen. Round Thatcher's Island and back

is just a nice sail, when the wind's right. Too bad you can't land on the island. It belongs to Mr. Huntington. He has a guard there to keep folks off. He's very particular about it."

"Looks to me like fog to-morrow," I said.

"Maybe you're a boatman yourself?" he suggested, but I disclaimed it.

While he was getting the key to take us up to our bedroom, I drew Tom aside.

"We mustn't let him think we haven't any baggage with us," I whispered. "He'd suspect right away that we're going to pull something. You slip down to the drugstore and get some wrapping paper. Then get one of the rugs out of the car and tie it up in a parcel. That's pretty crude, but it's the best we can do. And you better ring up Mrs. Ferry and tell her we're going to get over to Thatcher's Island if it's any way possible."

McGowan led me up to a stuffy chamber on the second floor, with two old-fashioned wooden beds. The room overlooked the street. I was disappointed that it was on the side of the house away from the water, but it couldn't be helped. The important thing was to let McGowan believe we were going to turn in for the night. I took off my shoes and collar while he was still in the room, sat down in the rocking chair and lit my pipe.

"You better give us a call in the morning, about seven-thirty," I said. "We're both tired to-night, and we might oversleep."

He left me, and I sat watching the street through the imitation lace curtains. Presently Tom came in, carrying the motoring robe neatly rolled up in a rug strap.

"There's a fire escape at the end of the corridor," he said. "We can drop from it into the alley alongside the house."

We both lay down for a little rest. There was an occasional rumble of motor engines from behind the house, a murmur of voices downstairs, and sometimes footfalls in the street under our windows. The blend of these mingled sounds was very tranquil, and we were tired. I found Gloucester Evans' little book, *Assorted Humbugs*, in my pocket, and began to read some of it for relaxation.

Evans' radicalism, for which Tom had expressed so hearty an aversion, seemed to me fairly harmless. I am no literary critic, but the young teacher's penseroso bits struck me as merely a sort of Walt Whitman in demi-tasse—or in casserole, maybe—Whitman diluted and warmed over for less hardy spirits. Apparently he was the sort of poet who feels his stuff would be ruined if each line began with a capital letter. I found one poem—but I would call them memoranda rather than poems—which ran thus:

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ENDLESS TIMIDITY OF STATESMEN

*Oh, youth!
clear eyes of youth, hesitance of youth,
sweet folly of youth!
far-sighted blindness, blinking vision;
brave shrinking, timid truculence;
wise folly,—mad sagacity,—
give me eyes, hands, reasons of youth
to purge and stablish
a new bright world!*

Reading this advertisement, I couldn't help smiling to myself to see Tom, who was buzzing the innocent and steady snore of a healthy young man—"purging and stablishing" himself with excellent slumber. I followed his example.

But I have a well-trained subconscious time sense, and I had set my mental alarm clock for midnight. A few minutes after twelve I woke.

Before rousing Tom I tiptoed down the hall in my stockings. A window opened upon the iron ladder of the fire escape. As gingerly as possible, lifting the sash cords inch by inch, I raised the lower frame and peeped out. I had an unpleasant surprise.

Two surprises, in fact. First, a pale thin mist was sifting in from the bay. We get a good deal of fog along the Sound in autumn, and it looked to me as though it would be pretty thick

by morning. Where the alley joined the main street was a lamp post; I could see how the vapoury drifts dimmed the globe with a shining haze. This, though favourable to our sneaking away from the hotel, would greatly hamper us on the water. But worse, a little way down the lane, in the direction of the dock, I could hear voices. Very likely McGowan had suspected our intention, and posted watchmen. It all seemed very preposterous; and yet I knew that the landlord could make things difficult if he caught us taking one of his boats by stealth. I wondered if our best strategy would not be to walk calmly out of the front door, since that was probably what they least expected. But it might be locked; or there might be some all-night employee at the desk who would report to the boss. Only one scheme occurred to me, and rather a wild one.

I went to the room, woke Tom, and explained my plan. He waited by the fire-escape window. From our bedroom I took the large china bowl and jug that stood on the washstand. With these I crept down the corridor, which ran the whole length of the house. At the far end were a similar window and fire escape. I opened the window cautiously, and threw the basin and jug out. They fell upon the roadway with a loud crash of splintering china. Instantly, as fast as I could go, I ran along the passage to our own

end, and we clambered down the fire escape. As I had expected, the noise at the other side of the house had attracted whoever had been loitering in the alley. The coast was clear. I slipped on my shoes and Tom and I flitted off on tiptoe. We dodged round some sheds, ran along parallel with the harbour, and in a few moments, aided both by mist and darkness, felt ourselves secure from pursuit.

But the problem of finding a boat was still to be solved. We thought it best to keep going away from McGowan's dock. A little farther along the bay, I knew, was the Eastern Point Yacht Club. We stumbled in the dark through a labyrinth of lumber yards, coal pits, and found ourselves trampling through chrysanthemums in someone's garden. I was familiar with the general layout of the harbour, but I knew it chiefly as seen from the water; and the details, blundered upon in foggy obscurity, were puzzling. Tom, however, was in excellent spirits and quite triumphant over our escape from the roadhouse.

We came presently to the Yacht Club jetty. There were, of course, a number of small boats lying about; but as I had feared, none of them had any oars. I had my eye on a small glass-cabin launch moored a little way out; but I feared that, even if we got to her, the engine might be hard to start. No man but the owner, my

experience tells me, can start a marine motor in the dark, for each launch engine is a law unto itself. The oars for the dinghies were shut up in the basement of the clubhouse—peering in through a window we could see them, clearly enough. For several minutes we were stumped.

But luck came to our assistance. I had noticed the starboard lantern of a boat anchored a hundred yards or so off the dock. While we were cogitating, there came a splash of oars. We hid under the pier, and saw a man in a yachting cap pulling in. He passed over our heads and we caught an extenuated fragrance of cigar. As soon as he had turned the corner of the clubhouse verandah, we hastened to the float at the end of the pier. There lay his dinghy. We hopped in. Tom threw down the roll of rug, which he had been carrying, and seized the oars. We pushed off.

Have you ever set out for a nine- or ten-mile row, at night, and in a thickening fog? Of course I knew the general direction of the island, but it was impossible to be sure that we were keeping a straight course.

We could see nothing ahead of us: even before we were out of the harbour we had nearly crashed into a couple of boats. Tom is a powerful but not an experienced oar, and after we had passed the spar buoy—which we scraped against

merely by chance, and from which I knew the bearing of the island pretty well—I decided to take the oars myself. I should much have preferred to let Tom do the work; but I feared that, like most unpractised oarsmen, he would unconsciously pull stronger with one arm and we might fetch an arc all round the bay without striking the island at all. So I slogged away interminably while Tom sat comfortably in the stern with the rug around him.

It was very still on the water. The fog, growing more dense, gathered on us in drops. The tide was going, which was an advantage except that I could feel it was carrying us to the eastward. I could hear, presently, the doleful clang of a bell buoy, which I took to be the one in the South Channel. My best plan, I reflected, was to let the current sweep us along until the bell sounded very close; then, after making certain of the buoy, to row across the tide as hard as possible. We would lose a lot of leeway, but at any rate, we would be sure to hit the island somewhere on the southern shore. So I took things fairly easily, pulling steadily, but also letting her slide with the ebb.

But nine miles is a devilish long way with a pair of oars. The whole expedition began to seem to me thoroughly insane. Only two nights before, I reflected, I had been sitting snugly in

the upholstered smokeroom of the *Aquitania*, with hardly an anxiety in the world. And here I was in a stolen dinghy, blistering my hands rowing almost at random in the middle of Pau-manok Bay. Suppose this was all only a false attempt? If we got to Thatcher's Island and found no one, what then? I was too depressed to announce my misgivings, but Tom seemed to divine them.

"Anyway," he said, "there must be *something* going on around here, or McGowan wouldn't have been so keen to keep us off the water."

I had stopped rowing to ease my hands and also to relight my pipe. The toll of the bell seemed pretty close now, but it was hard to judge in that bewildering fog. Far out toward the Sound I could hear a groaning like a bereaved cow—the foghorn at the lighthouse, I supposed. And then, off somewhere behind us in the darkness, another noise—the quick *putter-putter-putter* of a launch.

We harkened, but said nothing. There was nothing to be said. We could not know who it was, or why any one should be on the water at two o'clock on such a night. After all, it might only be fishermen.

"You take the oars for a spell," I said. "My hands are about done. Make for the sound of the bell. When we get to the buoy we'll tie up to it a bit, and then we'll have to pull across current."

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There's a queer bobble of water in those channels. The swell comes shouldering in from Montauk; the waves run one way and the tide another. Our light dinghy capered airily, and enveloped in that most intangible darkness we felt extraordinarily insecure. The harsh thudding strokes of the bell seemed to ring first from one side, then from another. But Tom stuck to it pluckily, I kept flashing my electric torch into the fog, and after a good deal of beating about we managed to locate the big iron tank, oscillating slowly in the flow of the tide. We nearly capsized, for while Tom tried with the oars to keep the boat's nose up to the buoy, I had to climb over him and make a grab to get our painter through the framework of the bell. Those conical tanks are awkward things to tie up to: the tide sucked us away before I could make fast, and trying to hold four things at once—boat, painter, flashlight, and buoy—I very nearly went over. I managed to drop the flashlight overboard, and cursed myself for being so unhandy. But we got hold eventually and rested, to prepare for the final effort. In between the deafening clangs of the bell we could hear the launch much more plainly. It sounded as though she too were making for the buoy. For some time we listened, and the quick gurgling explosions of the exhaust drew nearer.

"I don't like this," I said to Tom. "It seems

incredible, but I think we're being followed. I'm going to cast off. Row as hard as you can. Once we get across this race of water we'll be under the lee of the point. Then it's easy. We ought to strike the island just about amidships. There's a bay that runs in there, and a good smooth beach."

Tom put his back into it. It was nervous work, for we could see nothing. I don't believe I've ever had a more baffling experience. With no visible object to gauge by, we had no sense of movement or direction. Tom, at the oars, had some contact with reality by the feel of the water on the blades; but to me, sitting uneasily in the stern, it was like being suspended in black vacuum. The assurance I had pretended as to where we might make a landing waned rapidly. I began to wonder, with increasing panic, whether we might not be carried clear to eastward of the island, and be setting out to row toward Connecticut. The only consolation was that the moan of the lighthouse siren now came much fainter: I took this to mean that the island lay between us and Orient Point. Also the mysterious launch seemed to have moved off in the other direction. It sounded now—if my sense of the compass was still anywhere near accurate—to the northwest of us.

"I believe it's getting easier," said Tom. "I seem to get a bit more grip on the water."

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"Good man!" I said. "Ease up a little, then. I haven't the slightest notion where we are, and we don't want to run smack on a rock."

I had hardly said the word when we grated briskly over a shoal of pebbles and came to a violent halt. We both sprawled in the bottom of the boat, and I cracked my shins sharply against a thwart. But we were on the island!

VII

Angus Huntington always says that his island reminds him of a statue of that two-faced Roman god—Janus, wasn't it?—the god of janitors. It's a sort of symbol, I suppose, of the two-faced behaviour of most janitors and doormen: one countenance for the generous tippers, another for the rest. Anyway, it's true that (when your attention has been called to it) the outline of the island suggests two bearded profiles—two sort of Santa Claus faces, one looking east and one west. The two southern capes are the beards, and Huntington always referred to them as East Whisker and West Whisker. The lodge and its small jetty were just where the two beards joined, at the head of the shallow southern bay. It was somewhere in this bay, I believed, that we must have landed—probably, considering the set of the tide, not far from East Whisker.

We pulled the dinghy high up on the beach,

barking our shins on boulders. It was fiendishly dark, and I regretted the loss of the flashlight. Though I had often sailed past the island in previous years, I had never paid close attention to its topography. But, as well as we could gather by striking matches, we were on a gravel beach underlying a scarp of clay. The lodge, presumably, lay to westward, and my idea was to scramble along the shore until we found the jetty. My watch said three o'clock. In another three hours or so it would begin to get light; but those autumn fogs are always thickest in the early morning. The chances were that not until nine or ten o'clock would we be able to get a clear view of the scene.

We left the boat and groped along the beach. We went, of course, at a snail's pace, with hands outstretched in front of us. At first we tried to keep along the dividing line near high-water mark, where sand and stones joined. But we kept erring to one side or other and occasionally colliding with a fallen tree or stranded flotsam. Finally, at Tom's suggestion, we took off our shoes and stockings and waded, keeping the water at ankle depth. The pebbles and shells were painful to the feet, but we could steer more accurately by the feel of the water.

For a long time we splashed grimly on, testing each step cautiously. My mind was dwelling, I must admit, on the couching qualities of that fine

soft sand at the foot of the cliffs. It would have made a glorious dormitory for a nap. My hands were raw from the oars, my legs numb with the cold water and aching with fatigue. But I hesitated to suggest it to Tom, who seemed suddenly spurred on by a lively sense of excitement. Adventure, in my experience, makes excellent reading, but it is always very uncomfortable in the act. You know how even in your own home, when you go walking about in the dark, you are likely to bang into things. Consider then how it feels to grope through a black fog on a rough unknown beach. The distant continuing chime of that depressing bellbuoy was enough of itself to dishearten one. Then, as we were paddling painfully along, we heard a sudden scream. It seemed to come from above the cliff on our right hand.

We halted, horrified. It was a girl's voice. Before we had time to do more than feel the first tingle and stomach-dropping sensation of alarm, there was the report of a gun—almost over our heads, apparently. With an oath Tom ran blindly up the beach and I followed. We dropped our shoes and the rug, and began scrambling wildly up the bank. It was steep, of oozy clay, and inconceivably slippery. If it hadn't been for our bare feet I doubt if we could have scaled it. Toward the top it became sandy and overhanging.

The crumbly masses dissolved and slid as we clawed. By mere chance we struck the roots of a tree that was leaning half over the crest, and pulled ourselves up.

Only a few yards away, through the trees, we could hear a shrill babble of voices. There was a dull glow transfused into the fog. We broke through a thorny tangle of brush and ran toward the light. There was an open space among the trees, and a building dimly outlined in the gloom. From the windows poured a pale opaque brightness. I got my revolver ready.

We hurried at random toward the lighted window: it was like swimming in a bewildering sea of vagueness. I heard Tom crashing into something a little to one side. I sprawled headlong over a bench or some such obstacle. At that moment a door opened right before me. Before I could pull myself up I saw, above my head, a pair of legs outlined against the lighted interior. An active figure leaped upon me, and for a moment I was at a disadvantage. But I was just getting hold of my opponent when someone laid me out with a crash on the head. For a few minutes I was stunned.

When I came to, I was in a large, log-walled room—evidently the main chamber of the lodge.

On a stone hearth was a glowing fire, two lighted candles were on the table. My first hazy thought

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was that I had been captured by a band of young hoodlums. The place seemed full of boys. Then to my astonishment and inexpressible relief I saw it was Pandora bathing my head. Her face was vivid in the firelight, her eyes brilliant. There were the other girls too, all in khaki jackets and knickerbockers. Pandora was half crying with excitement.

"How could I know it was you, Uncle Melvy," she said. "I didn't meant to hurt you. I thought you were in England!"

"What is this tomfoolery?" I said, getting up.

"Oh, what shall we do?" she cried wildly.

"They've taken Marjorie."

Tom appeared at the door.

"Damnation, Kennedy," he said. "This Evans is too smart for us. He's gotten away with old Crockett."

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO
TOLD BY MARJORIE CONWAY

PART TWO

TOLD BY MARJORIE CONWAY

I

OF COURSE telling you all about this adventure means I've got to break the sacred vow of secrecy, but I've got Pandora's permission to do so. Mr. Kennedy says he's writing his part of the story and I'm to do the same. Of course if it hadn't been for Willie May and Jacqueline there would have been a lot more important things to write. It's queer how mere children can manage to interfere with one's plans.

Of course the whole thing began with having two such remarkable personalities as Pandora and Mr. Evans in the same school. When you get people like that around something is bound to happen. Naturally we called him Mr. Evans in public, but among ourselves we used to speak of him as G. G., which stands for Glorious Gloucester. Pandora was fairly wild about him, and so were we all. The idea of the P. P. P. was really worked out when Pandora was staying

with me last summer. We were just going to take in the five girls who were in G. G.'s Advanced English class. Willie May and Jacqueline were never real members. We had to pretend they were, but of course they were only children and interlopers.

G. G. liked Pandora best of all, which was only natural, because she is so fascinating. I am too fat, and Edna is too tall, and of course it would be hard to pick out a favourite between Fanny Kate and Annie Sue because they are twins—not only twins, but as G. G. used to say, facsimiles. Perhaps I'd better begin by putting down the list of charter members of the P. P. P. so there can be no mistake. The figures are their ages:

Pandora Kennedy	(18)
Edna Tareyton	(19)
Fanny Kate Jones	(18)
Annie Sue Jones	(18)
Marjorie Conway	(17)

I was the youngest, so they made me secretary.

I don't suppose any school ever had such a wonderful English teacher as Mr. Evans. He was not only a teacher, but a real writer. When his book of poems came out last year he was too modest to tell us, but Pandora saw an advertisement of it and we wrote to a bookseller for five

copies. One day, after the class, we all showed our copies and asked him to sign them for us. He was tremendously fussed. In fact that was the first time we realized he was *human*. Before that, in spite of always being so polite and charming, he had been rather far away. But then sometimes he would read us some of his own things, and it was wonderful to realize that we had a real poet in our midst. Pandora and I were room-mates, and sometimes at night we used to look over to where we could see G. G.'s light burning in the Faculty Wing and wonder if he was writing poems. When he was lecturing to us about Shelley and Keats and Tennyson, sometimes we would realize how remarkable it was to have a poet to tell us about such matters, and when he spoke about the struggles and enthusiasms of poets we would nudge each other, which meant that we understood that he had gone through similar moods. Of course he had no idea how we were thrilled. But he used to read a good deal of poetry to us, and he had a wonderful reading voice. He was a Harvard man and a fine athlete.

G. G. used to talk to us a good deal about other things than literature. He said you couldn't understand great writers unless you understood the human conditions and aspirations out of which their music sprang. As Pandora said, he had a passion for human betterment.

Little by little we began to understand what it would mean to the world if there were more people who had that same vision that he had. He was a very inspiring teacher for a girls' school, because he was a strong feminist and used to say it was women's duty to exert their influence in affairs. And of course, as Pandora said, a great many of the troubles in the world have happened because men have been allowed to run things. Men think that because there always have been politics that things must continue in the same way; of course that's sheer timidity. One of the thrilling things about G. G. was his courage. If statesmen were only brave enough to face unpopularity and follow the dreams of poets and prophets, he said, there would be no more wars and miseries.

We used to beg him to tell us more about politics and socialism, and what we could do to help toward freedom, but it was rather disappointing. He didn't actually say so, but we had a feeling that he felt it was his duty to be discreet on these subjects. Of course, you see, we all belonged to what you might call the capitalist class, and that bothered us a good deal because we feared he might feel there was a barrier between us. Pandora, as usual, took the lead in trying to solve this problem. She asked a newsdealer what were some radical publications and he sug-

gested two magazines called *The Liberator* and *The Single Tax Review*. We clubbed together our pocket money and subscribed for them. We didn't get much out of them and we didn't care for the pictures, which were rather crude, but we used to carry copies to class with us, and G. G. was very much surprised. I think he knew then that we were really with him. Edna made a bad break, because she hadn't had a chance to read the magazines. She got an idea that the Single Tax was a tax that had to be paid by bachelors, and asked G. G. how much it was?

Of course all this was a sacred secret. One of our difficulties was, it was so hard to get G. G. to ourselves. We were positive that if we could only have a good chance to talk to him he could tell us the most fascinating things about radicals and what could be done to liberate the suffering masses. Pandora was full of splendid enthusiasm. She felt it was our duty, coming from the capitalist class, to make a strong stand for justice. Instead of coming out into society, she said, we ought to come out for socialism. She made up the slogan of the P. P. P. after reading *The Liberator*. *Not debts but Gene Debts*, that was our password.

Pandora and I talked all this over during the summer. Of course there were disappointments. I got father to let us go and visit his factory, and

we talked to some of the workmen and tried to find out what their troubles were. The queer thing was that they didn't seem to have any. The cafeteria where they had lunch seemed to me to serve better food than Miss Van Velsor gave us at school, and in spite of our most tactful questions we couldn't discover any serious wrongs. But Pandora, with that splendid insight of hers, said that of course they suspected us as spies of capital, and besides they were naturally keeping their grievances hidden until the time came for Mass Action.

And then, little by little, we developed our great plan. We didn't tell the other girls about it until school met at the end of September, because it would have been dangerous to put it into writing.

The first meeting of the club was held on the tennis court. Edna, who is the most bookish of our members, said it was like the French Revolution because that also began on a tennis court. But Pandora, as usual, had the chief triumph. During the summer she had written to Gene Debs and had got a real letter from him sending his love and wishing us good luck. I was always rather vague in my mind about Mr. Debs and just what he had done, but certainly the *Liberator* said he had been cruelly wronged and it *was* thrilling to have a letter actually signed by him,

Your true comrade, Gene, and enclosing his picture. Fanny Kate rather broke up the meeting by confessing that until she saw the picture she thought it was Jean Debs, a woman.

Little by little, like a true leader, Pandora told us her plan. Naturally it had to be developed gradually, because if she had proposed it all at once I think the twins would have been alarmed. They were Southerners and not nearly so militant in their feminism. But as Pandora explained, this was really the only way we could help G. G. to put his noble visions into effect. Of course the hardest part of it was that we couldn't confide in him. But we had an idea that he really understood something of what was up. He looked at us very queerly when Pandora made a mysterious allusion to Gene Debs. I thought it was rather unfair of him to follow that up by giving us a specially long lesson in the *Idylls of the King*, to prepare for next day; but Pandora insisted that he did this as a kind of secret way of showing us he knew what was up. If he showed us any favouritism, Miss Van Velsor would be after him.

The next meeting of the club was to be specially private, because Pandora was going to present an outline of her plan of campaign. So we held it in the hayloft over the stables. And then occurred the horrible calamity that did so

much to spoil the whole thing. I suppose we had been a little too public in our passwords and countersigns, and had roused jealousy among some of the younger girls. Of course there is no fun in a secret society unless people know it exists. At any rate, Pandora had just made a fine speech and had shown what a stunning success the thing would be, when we all turned pale with horror. Down from a beam overhead, where they had been hiding, tumbled Jacqueline and Willie May. They were shrieking with laughter.

"P. P. P.!" they yelled. "Pandora's Perilous Pioneers! We know what your club is about, and what J. J. A. stands for."

Of course "J. J. A." was the club name for Pandora, the Juvenile Joan of Arc. This was the name I had invented for her, and she was very proud of it. We were awfully indignant to have these vulgar children discover our secrets, and we knew it would be all over the school like lightning. Fanny Kate and Annie Sue sprang upon Willie May, who is their younger sister, and a great trial to them, like tigers, but the devilish youngster could not be suppressed.

"Pandora's Perilous Pioneers!" she kept shouting. "I don't care if you torture me, we know the secret. Jacqueline, run quick and tell someone. Oh, *won't* they catch it! Mr. Evans will be horribly angry."

Jacqueline was scrambling madly through the hay, and in another minute all would have been ruined. But Pandora showed the stuff she was made of.

"Be quiet!" she roared. "Fellow members, we'll have to stop their mouths. We'll let them into the club."

II

The initiation was held immediately. Of course we hadn't held any initiations, because there hadn't been any members except the charter five; but Pandora improvised a very severe ceremony. When they had been properly squelshed by a lot of oaths and humiliations they became, as new members always do, extremely respectful and keen. Of course being such children they didn't fully understand the seriousness of the enterprise. They seemed to think it was just a kind of picnic, or even a hunt for buried treasure, or some such rot. And that was all right, because as Pandora said that night when we were alone in our room and talking things over, if those infants had known the extent of the interests involved in this affair, they would have been scared.

But now the thing was getting close I won't say I wasn't nervous myself. Even Pandora, who is absolutely fearless, looked rather sober as she brushed her hair for bed. She opened her bureau

drawer and took out her copy of G. G.'s book which she had sewn into a little chintz cover to keep it clean.

"If it wasn't for *him*," she said, "I wouldn't go through with it. If things go wrong, we'll be in a dreadful mess. But it's the only way. Of course we might go on trying to influence our own families, but you saw how your father acted last summer. He took it all as a joke. I can't work on Uncle Melville because he's abroad. The only thing is to find someone who isn't family, because he may take us seriously. And that darling old Mr. Crockett is the perfect person, because he's fond of me and also he's frightfully powerful. According to the *Liberator* the government does exactly what he and his partners tell them to. So he's the one for us to get hold of."

She hopped onto the bed and sat there with her chin on her knees, looking just like a baby in her white gown and short fluffy hair. It was queer to think of such a youthful-looking person wielding this terrific power.

"We'll have to do it as soon as possible," she said. "There are three reasons: (A) I don't trust those two children, if we keep them waiting too long they'll get impatient and let out hints. (B) This fine warm weather won't last much longer. (C) The *Liberator* says that the great forces of reaction will be very strong at that

Conference in Washington, so now is the time to strike."

Pandora has a very methodical mind, and when she is thinking hard she arranges her arguments in A's and B's and C's. She got the habit from G. G., who always lectures like that.

"Meet me in the hall to-morrow after Geometry class," she said. "I'll work out some instructions."

That was another thing about Pandora I always admired. No one ever saw her doing any work, and yet when the time came she was always ready—her notebook neatly written up, or her algebra problems studied out, or whatever it was. And so, when we met the next morning, and went off to the summerhouse to be secret, I was not surprised to see her bring out a long list of notes.

"I did this in Study Hour," she said. "Miss Van thought I was writing that theme about Ruskin. Now you're secretary, you'll have to make copies of this. You see, I've written down separate instructions for each member so she can know exactly what she is to do. In a thing like this we've got to have Organization. I'll have to keep the full list, so I will know what each one is responsible for."

It took me a long time to copy out the instructions. In fact, I rather flunked Algebra that afternoon because I had spent most of the prep.

PANDORA LIFTS THE LID

time on the job. I passed round the slips at Evening Prayers. A number of hearts beat rather wildly that night at old Van Velsor.

But the greatest excitement was when I was passing through the hall after Prayers. Pandora was looking at the bulletin board. There we saw, written in G. G.'s sturdy handwriting, a little notice:

*The English VI Class please see me
in the Library at 8.30 o'clock to-night
to arrange for rehearsals of the Hallow-
e'en Play.*

We hunted out the other three girls and showed them the notice.

"That settles it," said Pandora. "That's just the chance we need." She wouldn't explain what she meant.

We all met G. G. in the Library at the appointed time. In the evenings he always wore a dinner coat, this was rather an unradical thing to do, but Pandora said that naturally in a school full of capitalistic women he would be too courteous to do otherwise. Besides, perhaps it was one of Miss Van's rules. In his dinner coat and his shell spectacles he was simply stunning. He had written a little play for the class to perform on Hallowe'en.

"Now, girls," he said, "we'll have to begin re-

hearsals, if we're going to make a good job of the great work."

We all tittered a bit nervously, and Edna pinched me, which is a favourite trick of hers when excited. We knew, of course, that he was speaking in parables, and was referring not merely to the play but to our great Coup. We felt surer than ever that he understood everything and approved.

"What do you say to beginning rehearsals on Monday?" he asked in a kindly way.

"I should like to make a suggestion," said Pandora. "It's awfully hard to get any privacy round here for rehearsals and we want to surprise the school with the play. I think Miss Van Velsor would give us permission to go for a picnic on Monday and we could take our lunch with us and go down on the shore somewhere and rehearse in quiet. If you would come with us, to act as director, we could get a good start."

We were amazed at J. J. A.'s audacity; but after all the suggestion was reasonable enough. Miss Van Velsor always allowed the Sixth Form to go off on a hike of some sort two or three times a term, and we hadn't had one yet this year.

G. G. seemed quite calm. "Very well," he said. "If Miss Van Velsor agrees, I think it would be fun."

"I won't ask her until Monday morning," said

Pandora. "No use bothering her until we see if the weather is going to be fine."

The momentous Day dawned beautifully enough. Even to me, Pandora had not told the full details of her daring scheme, and little did I think, as we hurried into our camping clothes, what adventures were to befall.

We made an early start. Willie May and Jacqueline were so excited that I was afraid they would give the secret away by their antics. Miss Van was a bit surprised at our taking these two children with us, but we explained they were needed in the play.

Pandora suggested that we go over toward Vesperhen Point, and we started in that direction. Knowing her plans I was wondering how the two smaller girls were going to manage the long hike to Barclay's Inlet. Even the twins, who are rather lazy, would probably complain. But I felt sure something would happen. It was lovely swinging along the Middle Country Road in the morning sunshine. Pandora wore her red tam-o'-shanter and looked as bold as a lion. G. G. was great fun, and at first we all clustered so close to him to hear him talk that we kept tripping over each other. Willie May and Jacqueline had a fit of crazy giggles and kept in front of the procession. We hadn't gone far before an empty truck caught up with us. The man offered us a

lift and we all piled in. We sang songs most of the way to Fountain Harbour. There the truck stopped. We tumbled out and went down to the beach for lunch. It was only about eleven o'clock but you know how quickly you get hungry on a picnic.

While we ate, G. G. began to talk about the rehearsal. The two idiotic children, who were perfectly aware of what was coming, kept giggling and rolling about in fits of laughter, so much so that we were afraid they would give things away. The sheet of instructions made out for the twins had included the duty of keeping Willie May and Jacqueline in order, but this was a mistake, for one of the children being their sister, of course they had less influence. However Pandora squelshed them with an angry eye, and we kept stuffing them with hard-boiled eggs and doughnuts in the hope that plenty of rich food would exhaust their vitality. Pandora made her suggestion without batting an eyelid. She said that as we were now only about three miles from Barclay's Inlet, the best thing to do was to go there for our rehearsal, where we would be undisturbed. G. G. wondered how we would get back, if we went so far. We'll get Mullion to run us back in the boat, said Pandora.

Pandora's chief job was to keep G. G. from suspecting anything. As we went through Foun-

tain Harbour, on our way to the Barclay's Inlet Road, we all stopped in at a drugstore for a sundae. I saw Pandora give Edna a strong look, and Edna slipped into a telephone booth. Of course, as I had copied out all the orders, I knew that she was to telephone a baffling message to Mr. and Mrs. Mullion to go over to Huntington. Edna didn't like doing this, but we had all taken the sacred oath to obey the J. J. A. in everything.

I will be brief about this part, as the really important adventures came later.

It is a lovely walk from Fountain Harbour to Barclay's Inlet, first along the water and then through Mr. Kennedy's woods. When we got to the house of course it was deserted, as the Mullions had been lured away by Edna's message, but Pandora had a latchkey. Mr. Kennedy has often had us over to the Inlet for parties, and we felt quite at home. G. G., unsuspecting, immediately arranged a rehearsal on the verandah. It was hard to put our minds on the play, which we knew would probably never be performed, but with Pandora's stern eye upon us we did the best we could. When it began to grow dusk G. G. got anxious about getting back to school. But Pandora was quite calm. "Oh," she said, "Miss Van Velsor gave us permission to stay out for supper. Old Mr. Crockett is coming over to have it with us, and we're going to convert

him to radicalism. Then we'll sail back in the boat."

G. G. was puzzled, but of course he thought everything was all right. Little did he know how carefully we had planned to help him with his brave visions. Pandora had ordered a taxi to come from Fountain Harbour. Now it came and she drove off to get Mr. Crockett. The only thing that worried her was perhaps the Mullions would get back before we left.

Pandora buzzed away in the flivver, taking Jacqueline with her, because she said it would be better to keep the two children separated until the deed was over. Also she wanted to use Jacqueline to call up Miss Van. I read over my notes and everything was carried out faithfully. The twins were assigned to sit with G. G. on the verandah, in the romantic twilight, and ask him questions about socialism. (Pandora had made out a list of questions for them in case they ran out of ideas; but we trusted their Southern vivacity to keep up the conversation.) Willie May looked rather bereaved without her chum, and fearing she might become dangerous I seized her. Edna and I were to get the food down to the boat, and we made Willie May help us. We picked out the nicest-looking things we could find in the storeroom and rolled them down to the dock in a wheelbarrow. To please Jacqueline we

took along a case of Jones's Ginger Julep, a kind of ginger ale which is made by her father in Atlanta. There was a rowboat at the dock, and we took the stuff out to the *Pandora*. The J. J. A. had told me where to find the cabin key in the boathouse, so we were able to get in and put everything away neatly in the little kitchen. The *Pandora* is a darling yacht, it was thrilling to see those snug sofas and think how soon we would all be safely on board. There are blankets and things in the lockers, and we made up the two bunks in the little stateroom, these were to be enjoyed by Mr. Crockett and G. G.

G. G. was much excited about going to meet Mr. Crockett and we were overjoyed to think how his noble visions would soon make the old capitalist change his reactionable ideas. But he was worried about our being out so late, and once he went to the 'phone to call up Miss Van. We were horribly frightened for a moment, but he found that the wire was out of order. Pandora told me afterward that she had quite calmly leaned out of a window and cut the wire where it entered the house.

It was pretty nearly seven o'clock before Pandora got back. With her were Mr. Crockett and Jacqueline, and she had brought a basket of groceries. Mr. Crockett is a most fascinating person; he was wearing evening dress and was

full of fun. But he is enormously old and I saw right away that we would have to take good care of him. He has a weakness in his chest, and Pandora said she was worried about his having only his dress clothes because the waistcoat wasn't much protection. It was strange to think that such a friendly, amusing old gentleman was so dangerous to liberal thought.

But Pandora was in a fearful state of mind for fear the Mullions might get back. She hurried us all on board, and everything was done so swiftly that no one had time to worry. G. G., of course, was glad to get the party on the yacht because he thought we were bound back for Marathon. Pandora knows all about managing the boat. She made G. G. start the engine, and as there was no wind we didn't bother about putting up the sails. In getting loose from the mooring Pandora dropped her tam overboard, but that was the only accident. The two children were commanded to stay in the cabin until the bustle of starting was over, for fear they might fall overboard. The twins were to get supper and lay the table; Edna was to supervise the young children; I was to engage G. G. and Mr. Crockett in conversation. The J. J. A. who knows all the water perfectly from sailing with her uncle, took the wheel. So began the cruise of the *Pandora*.

III

Supper was great fun. There was only room for four at the little table, so we made the two children, who were roaring for food, eat theirs on one of the couches. Of course Pandora was at the wheel and looked very romantic leaning over the lighted binnacle and studying the chart. The twins were flying to and fro with dishes, and Edna and I sat down with Mr. Crockett and G. G. Pandora had planned scrambled eggs on anchovy toast for Mr. Crockett, since this was his favourite nourishment, and he exclaimed that the Literary Club (such he innocently imagined the P. P. P. to be) were the best of caterers. Little did he suspect that this was no mere amusement but very likely the beginning of a new era. Pandora's food was carried up to her by Willie May. She and Jacqueline had been appointed cabin boy and bosun and were much gratified, until they learned they were expected to wash the dishes.

G. G. was wonderful at supper. You see, this was really the first time we had met him in what you might call an intimate social way, and I was fascinated to find him so attractive. He and Mr. Crockett got along together splendidly. I had been worrying whether Mr. Crockett would be very angry when the announcement came of our intentions, and was relieved when Pandora sum-

moned me to the wheel. She showed me exactly how to steer the course, and descended to the cabin with determined mien. I waited, trembling, half expecting to hear cries of anger. Pandora made a ringing speech, explaining matters with tremendous frankness. At school, she said, we were surrounded by trammels and restrictions. We knew that Mr. Evans had messages of great truth for us, and for *Capital* (she emphasized this in a very meaning way) and that if we could get off into a little privacy we could learn much. Now that the world was in such an unsettled condition, through the fault of the older generations, it was right that youth should purge and stablsh a new state of things. "You, Mr. Crockett," she declaimed (I was thrilled when I heard her!), "have it in your power to do much. And therefore we have shanghaied you and Mr. Evans on board this ship, which is well provisioned for any emergency, and we are bound for a desert island where radical truths will be explained. Naturally, we will be merciful to your frail condition, and nothing brutal will be attempted. But the purpose of this voyage is to convert you to liberal ideas, and we have brought Mr. Evans too because he can explain them."

It was better, Pandora told me afterward, to say "a desert island" than to tell them exactly

where we were going. It sounded more threatening. Of course she knew that the Huntingtons were abroad, as she gets letters from Dorothy Huntington; and she had been on Thatcher's Island once for a picnic, and knew Hutchins, the keeper.

To our great surprise it was not Mr. Crockett who made any trouble, but G. G., who was just a little bit unreasonable considering what risks we had run to help his cause. Of course by now we were all fatally compromised and it was doubtful if Miss Van Velsor would ever let us come back to school. But as Pandora says, you can't go in for these things halfway, and think what Gene Debs and others had suffered for their convictions. Mr. Crockett was a thorough sportsman, however, and showed no signs of fear. In fact he laughed a great deal and after we had assured him he was in no personal danger he said that he was open to argument and if we could convert him, well and good. He said his only regret was that we had not kidnapped our fathers, too, it was a pity they should miss it. We were encouraged by this and began to think that perhaps he was not so reactionable after all.

Willie May and Jacqueline were bursting with glee, and we realized the folly of confiding any secrets to them, for they soon blurted out that it

was Thatcher's Island we were bound for. They kept asking to have a look at the chart of the island, for being only unbalanced youngsters they still had an idea there was to be some hunting for buried treasure. But Pandora shut them up by sending them forward to wash the dishes. Then she took the wheel again and the yacht went steadily on.

In spite of her happiness she did not forget her duty as mariner, and steered with a firm hand. G. G. gradually overcame his agitation and went on deck where he sat talking with Pandora. This privilege, of course, was her right, being captain, and I joined the party in the cabin where Mr. Crockett was very amusing and we played Up-Jenkins. After the excitement and danger of the day it was a relief to enjoy mere recreation. We heard occasional outbursts, both of laughter and complaint, from the cabin boy and bosun, who were clattering about in the galley, but we paid little heed.

Presently G. G. came into the cabin. Evidently the J. J. A.'s enthusiasm had overcome any scruples he had about taking advantage of the aged Capitalist, for he was quite calm and cheerful. "Mr. Crockett," he said, "since we are so outnumbered by our captors we may as well submit with good grace." He and Mr. Crockett began talking about politics, and Pandora, seeing

that the good work was already beginning, summoned us on deck for a conference.

"Now," she said, "we have a long run before us and we'll have to stand watches. G. G. and Mr. Crockett must have the little stateroom, and we will require their word of honour that they will make no attempt to escape. Willie May and Jacqueline will take the two bunks in the focsle. Edna, just fasten down the forward hatch so they can't slip up the focsle ladder and get fooling round on deck. Marjorie, you and the twins take the couches in the cabin and get some sleep. Edna and I will take the first watch on deck. It's pretty nearly ten o'clock, I'll call you at twelve. It's so calm and clear, we ought to get to the island by two."

These orders were obeyed. G. G. and Mr. Crockett were put in the small stateroom, where we knew they would be very comfortable. The children, who were getting sleepy, made no objection to their primitive bunks next the galley. In the cabin, the twins lay down, foot to foot, on the long settee, and I took the short one. The engine, under the ladder, made a comforting kind of racket, and just above us we could see Pandora in the light of the binnacle. I felt selfish to be resting while she was still on duty, but while I was thinking about it I fell asleep.

Of course, as I might have suspected, Pandora

didn't wake us at all. I woke up about one o'clock and found Edna asleep on the cabin floor sprawled out on a rug, with her feet almost in the flywheel. The twins, on the other couch, were both dead to the world. I had a dreadful pang of conscience and crept up the ladder. There was the heroic J. J. A., still sitting at the wheel with a chart and a flashlight beside her. Only her noble visions of a new era could have kept her alive, the sole commander of a shipload of snoring passengers. She was awfully cold and stiff, but she wouldn't give in.

"We've done better than I thought," she said. "You see that flash? That's the lighthouse at Orient Point. When we get round that, we're almost there. Take the wheel a few minutes while I have a look at the engine. Maybe it needs oil."

It was wonderful to me, the way she steered round the point (where we could feel the big Atlantic swell coming in) and through the channel into Paumanok Bay. I suppose when you know about these things it's fairly easy, but it seemed like magic. Our eyes were used to the dark by this time, and we could see the island lying black on our left. It's much bigger than I expected: for a long time we ran beside it. Far off I could see some lights, which Pandora said were Eastern Point. At last she spun the wheel round and we turned in toward the island. Mr.

Huntington's lodge was at the southern end. She yawned fiercely.

"When we've tied up to the pier," she said, "I think we'll rouse the whole crowd and go ashore. I don't care if it *is* the middle of the night, I'm tired, and I want a real sleep. Hutchins will just have to let us into the lodge, and there we can be very comfortable."

Then a queer thing happened. As we rippled over the smooth black water, a light appeared on the island. It was low down by the shore, and slowly moved upward as though it was travelling up a pole. Then it came down, and was again lifted. It did this three times, and disappeared.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"I haven't an idea," she replied. "Perhaps Hutchins heard us coming and is signalling to show us where the dock is. See, there it is again, down by the water."

We shut off the engine and drifted in. Presently we could make out that a lantern was standing on the end of the dock. I ran up to the bow to be ready to tie the rope. Thanks to the light, we could see very well, and Pandora steered skillfully so that we came gently alongside.

I jumped out with the rope, and Pandora followed. We tied the yacht bow and stern, but still there was no motion below. Both the capitalist and the young radicals all slept soundly.

"It's funny," said Pandora, looking at the lantern. "You might almost think we were expected."

Just then we saw a light flash among the trees on a hill high up above us.

"Yes, that's the lodge," she said. "Hutchins is awake, so we'll have no trouble. Gosh, I'll be glad to get a snooze."

We went below and Pandora sternly roused the crew. "Show a leg!" she shouted, which is the right nautical speech on such occasions. There were groans in the cabin; and as for Willie May and Jacqueline, every time we hauled them out of their bunks they climbed in again like mechanical dolls. At last we pounded them awake. Pandora rapped on the stateroom door, and G. G.'s manly voice, rather surprised, finally responded.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," Pandora said, "but we're there. We're going ashore. There's a house, where we can be more comfortable."

"We're very comfortable here," replied G. G., in a drowsy tone. But in a few moments he appeared, followed by Mr. Crockett, who seemed quite calm. As Edna said, for all he knew we might have been on the way to the guillotine in a tumbril; but he was cheerful and bold.

"What's this?" he said. "Another meeting of the club already?"

Pandora made him wrap a scarf round his chest, over his evening clothes, and helped him into his overcoat. We took the blankets from the yacht, not knowing how many there would be in the lodge. Then we started up the path from the dock, Pandora in front carrying the lantern. It was a steep and stony climb in the dark, and Mr. Crockett began to grumble. The lodge stands on top of the bluff, where the trees have been cleared to give a view of the bay. We marched straight toward the light, and just as we got to the house the door opened. A rough looking man stood there, and said something which I did not catch. Then he stepped out.

"Why, blank blank blank!" he exclaimed. "What's all this?"

(Mr. Kennedy has told me to write everything exactly as it happened, but of course it's not necessary to include bad language.)

I suppose we did make a curious display, little Mr. Crockett in his dress suit and muffled up with scarf and overcoat; G. G. so tall and attractive; all the girls in their scouting knickers and carrying blankets.

Pandora was undaunted. "Hello, Hutchins!" she called out. "This is Pandora Kennedy. We've got a party here from the school and we've brought Mr. Crockett and Mr. Evans, and we're going to camp out in the lodge."

I thought Hutchins would faint. He brought a lamp and held it up high to get a good look at us. He seemed awfully angry, and I couldn't help thinking he was frightened, too.

"I'm sorry, miss," he growled, "but there's nothing doing. Mr. Huntington gave me orders not to allow no one inside the lodge."

"That's nonsense," Pandora said. "I'm a friend of Mr. Huntington's, and here's Mr. Crockett, Mr. Alexander J. Crockett, you know who *he* is."

Hutchins kept peering at us as though he couldn't believe his eyes, and looking about as though he thought someone was hiding behind us. He was awfully cross.

"I don't care *who* it is," he said. "Orders is orders. I can't let you in the lodge, that's flat. You'll have to beat it."

G. G. stepped forward in the most commanding way. As soon as we heard him speak we realized that this was a different G. G. from the one we had known. We were tremendously thrilled.

"Look here," he said powerfully. "You're not going to turn a party of girls loose in the woods at this time of night. Don't be ridiculous. Miss Kennedy says there's plenty of room in the lodge, and we're coming in."

I thought of course the creature would submit when he heard that impressive voice, but he ut-

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tered a horrid oath and grabbed a gun from behind the door.

"Don't get fresh!" he shouted fiercely. "What kind of a game is this anyhow, springing a party of nuts in here in the middle of the night! I don't care if you're friends of Huntington's, or not, you got no business pulling this kind of stuff. You can just get back in that boat of yours and travel somewheres else."

He slammed the door in our faces.

The future looked very dark for the P. P. P. Old Mr. Crocket sneezed, Willie May and Jacqueline began to whimper, and Pandora, who naturally felt the responsibility most heavily, was sadly agitated. But G. G.'s voice resounded in a comforting way.

"We'll have to go back to the boat."

"I just *won't* go back to the boat," stated Pandora. "I want to get some sleep and I don't want to be all crowded in that stuffy little cabin."

"Now, Pandora," said G. G. kindly, "just be reasonable. We can't sleep on the ground. You girls and Mr. Crockett go back to the yacht, and I'll camp out on the pier. That'll give you more room."

This self-sacrificing suggestion bucked up our weary leader.

"We said we were coming to the island, and we're not going to retreat. Willie May, stop

yammering! There's an old barn off behind the lodge somewhere. We can go and sleep there. That's what I'm going to do, anyhow. The rest of you can go back to the boat if you like."

Of course we couldn't desert the J. J. A., and even Mr. Crockett didn't seem anxious to stumble down the cliff again in the dark. But as we followed Pandora and the lantern I was pretty homesick for that snug cabin.

The barn was some way behind the house, across a stony pasture field wet with dew. Mr. Crockett was no longer quite the genial old gentleman, I heard him muttering to himself, which was bad, because so much of our success depended on keeping him in a good humour. But luckily we found the barn open and plenty of dry hay. G. G. now showed himself a trump. He immediately made Mr. Crockett comfortable in a nest of hay, and then began collecting some wood. Soon he had a fire going in front of the barn and the brightness helped to cheer us up. Pandora had thrown herself down in the hay, wrapped up in a blanket, and was already asleep. The rest of us did the same, but I must confess that I didn't sleep right away. Where I lay I could see out through the big doorway of the barn; I could see G. G. who was sitting on a log beside the fire. And across the field a light kept moving round the lodge, appearing first at

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one window, then at another. There were sounds, too—scrapings and hammerings. But I was too tired to pay much attention.

IV

I don't know just what time it was when I woke, but the sun was quite high and the view from the barn was very romantic and exciting. The lodge, a kind of long bungalow built of logs, made me think of a fine book called *The Prisoner of Zenda*. It stood in an open space among tall trees. On account of the high hill overlooking the water we couldn't see the dock, but far out the bay was shining.

The haymow looked rather like a battlefield with corpses strewn about. The two children had evidently gone out, for they were not visible and I could hear a squawking of hens behind the barn which probably meant they were being chased. By the ashes of the fire G. G. lay asleep rolled up in his rug. Pandora and the other members were still asleep. Old Mr. Crockett must have felt cold, for he seemed to have burrowed out of sight. Just then he sat up, and I almost laughed. In his dress suit and skullcap, with bits of hay sticking to him, he looked rather like a fierce vulture or condor.

"Well," he said, gazing at me, "how are the

young communists and when does the converting begin?"

The first thing to do, I thought, was to go down to the boat and start breakfast cooking. I crept out quietly, wanting Pandora to get all the rest possible, and rounded up the two children, who were behind the barn climbing a big wood-pile in very high spirits. I was a bit nervous about the savage Hutchins, and wished that G. G. would wake so that we could rely on him in case the keeper appeared. Jacqueline said she would wake him fast enough, and seized some pebbles, but I stopped her in time. We made a long detour through the field and the woods so as to avoid the lodge. When we came to the edge of the cliff, looking forward to hurrying down to the water for a refreshing wash, I uttered an exclamation of horror. There was the little pier, and all the bay very cheerful in the sunshine, but the *Pandora* was gone!

"We're marooned!" cried those idiotic children in an ecstasy. With one accord they turned and ran madly back to the barn to be the first to spread this bad news. In spite of most earnest efforts I could not catch them; they are both skinny little devils and very swift. They burst yelling into the barnyard. "The boat's gone, the boat's gone!" they shouted. "The boat's gone and we're marooned on a lonely desert island!"

They capered about joyously, repeating this absurd sentiment in a rhythmical way—"The boat's gone—and we're marooned—on a lonely desert island!"

G. G. sat up looking very fierce, and more manly than ever because in the morning light it was evident that he needed a shave. Pandora and the other girls ran out of the barn, very tousled and bewildered. Finally old Mr. Crockett also appeared, with his muffler round his neck, and inquired the meaning of the uproar. "Has another capitalist been captured?" he asked.

G. G. at once ran to the edge of the hill, followed by the rest of us. It was only too true. On all the bay we could see no sign of the sloop. There was not even a rowboat at the dock.

"We'll have to build a raft!" exclaimed Jacqueline.

"How about food?" cried Fannie Kate.

Pandora had entirely recovered from the fatigue of the night. She seemed to be studying the situation in silence, but I saw a flash in her eyes that meant something. She motioned me off to one side.

"I don't know what this means," she said, "but perhaps it's the best thing that could have happened. Don't you see, now we've got G. G. and Mr. Crockett absolutely to ourselves, there's no danger of their slipping away, and we can spend

all our time in influencing Mr. Crockett. I shouldn't wonder if G. G. had the boat hidden on purpose. It's wonderful!"

G. G. strode back to the lodge and pounded on the door. We waited, expecting to see the furious Hutchins burst forth. But there was no answer. G. G. flung open the door and we all trailed in.

The place was empty and in a fearful mess. In the big living room chairs and tables were pushed to one side, and the kitchen was in disorder. The little bedrooms, opening off the living room, were all clean and undisturbed, but everywhere else the place showed signs of hasty flight. There were empty bottles lying about and empty boxes. Jacqueline and Willie May insisted that there must be treasure concealed somewhere, but Mr. Crockett, who suddenly showed a sort of detective genius, pointed to some scratches on the floor and furrows in the ground by the front door.

"The treasure has been removed," he said.

"Bootleggers," said G. G. "Our friend Hutchins has plainly been working in partnership with smugglers. He knew that Mr. Huntington was abroad, and he wasn't likely to be disturbed. We just happened to break in upon him when he had a cargo of stuff here. He's made a get-away before we could catch him in the act."

"I wonder if he'll be back," said Mr. Crockett.

Pandora announced that there were a few groceries in the pantry, a half barrel of flour, some sugar, bacon and coffee. This turned our thoughts toward breakfast; we had noticed a cow in the pasture.

"Does any one know how to milk?" asked G. G.

The idea was very distasteful to me, as I have always been rather alarmed of cows. In fact no one volunteered, until Mr. Crockett, who had been poking about in an inquisitive way, overheard us. "What?" he said. "Milk the cow? Why, yes, I'll have a try. I was brought up a country boy. I guess I can manage it. Perhaps the old capitalist will be more useful than some of the radicals, hey?"

Pandora said that Mr. Crockett would get his feet wet in the pasture so G. G. hastened off to catch the animal and bring her to the barn. The children were instructed to see if they could find some fresh eggs. Thus the five charter members were left together for a few moments (we were lighting the kitchen stove and straightening up the living room) and Edna, who is usually rather quiet, sprang a delightful surprise. She dove down inside her blouse and produced a flag she had made in secret. It was a beautiful red silk, the radical colour, and she had embroidered on it, in white, the initials P. P. P.

"In honour of our adorable captain," she proclaimed, "and in anticipation of this momentous adventure, I have made this flag."

We hoisted it on the pole in front of the lodge, and felt greatly encouraged. Edna also brought forth a small sewing kit she had with her, in case of buttons needed or any other emergency. Pandora praised her heartily for this maternal instinct.

The thing we chiefly regretted was that we hadn't thought to bring a camera. It would have been wonderful to have a photo of old Mr. Crockett milking the cow in his dress suit. We would have gathered around to admire this wondrous sight, but we feared to embarrass the animal. A good deal of the milk went on Mr. Crockett's trousers, but he was successful on the whole. "Just think," he said, "only last night I was telling my man Bradway that I didn't need any new evening clothes."

In this great emergency it luckily happened that the various members showed unsuspected talents. Edna, who was of a housewifely disposition, got the kitchen cleaned up (that Hutchins must have lived in a very piggish way), the twins volunteered to cook bacon and eggs and make coffee, Pandora and I aired the bedrooms and laid the table. G. G. found an axe and split some kindling. It must have been lunch time when

everything was finally ready, and we decided to have two meals in one.

At first Mr. Crockett could not be found, and we were alarmed, but finally he was discovered behind the barn. He had found a vegetable garden, and was busy digging up potatoes and carrots and things. He had thrown off his muffler and while his clothes would have horrified Bradway, he was in fine spirits.

"I believe this is just what I needed," he said. "I shall apply to Angus Huntington for Hutchins's job. Where did you get the idea that the working man is unfortunate?"

So, although the meal was rather crude, it was much relished. The children babbled merrily about digging for buried treasure. G. G. said that since we were cut off from civilization this would be a chance to give socialism a real test, and that each person must do the work for which he was best fitted. Mr. Crockett said, in that case he thought *he* had better make the coffee. It was true that the twins had not been very successful. Pandora said that in the Socialistic State the education of the young was an important matter, and that therefore Willie May and Jacqueline ought to go on with their lessons; but the two children set up such an outcry that Mr. Crockett pleaded for them. Mr. Crockett said he agreed with them that there might be treasure

of much value concealed somewhere on the island, and encouraged them to search for it.

After the meal, while the members cleaned up, and the two children went off to dig, Mr. Crockett and G. G. sat on the bench outside the lodge and smoked. We heard Mr. Crockett say that if he only had a newspaper to read, he would have no complaint against the Socialistic State. G. G. remarked that we would have to start a tobacco plantation, because his supply was almost exhausted. I thought we were beginning well, and that it was an excellent sign that this remarkable old man was in such good humour. But Pandora was worried. "I know him better than you," she said, "and when his cigars run out he will be very different."

It was Pandora's idea that in the afternoon G. G. should give us all a lecture on disarmament, for Mr. Crockett's benefit; but when we were all ready the old gentleman objected. He said he was tired and didn't feel up to any conversation at that moment. He said he would go and lie down. Pandora had been worrying about his chest, for the air was rather sharp. He kept on throwing off his muffler, so while he had a nap Pandora took his dress coat. She cut off the tails and made them into little flaps, stitched onto the lapels and buttoning across the bosom of his shirt. This was not only advantageous

for his lungs but also concealed his shirtfront, which was now very dirty.

So while Mr. Crockett slept, and Willie May and Jacqueline departed with loud cries to seek for treasure, G. G. and the members went to explore the island. Hutchins had left a gun and some cartridges in his hasty flight. G. G. took this weapon, which he called humorously a fowling piece. He said that our food would not last long and we might shoot some rabbits. So we set off, feeling rather like the Swiss Family Robinson. It was a pity that on this expedition intended for peace our first foray was so blood-thirsty. G. G. explained that this was the necessary contradiction between theories and facts. But I do not think he was accustomed to firearms, for though he fired fiercely at several rabbits, they escaped. This was due probably to our being a large party and quite noisy going through the woods.

We followed the edge of the cliffs, to keep a view of the beach in case the yacht had drifted anywhere along the shore. But though we went as far as the point which Pandora called East Whisker (from which we could see a long way up the coast) there was no sign of the boat. From that side of the island you look off at the open ocean, and it gave us rather a lonely feeling to see the surf breaking all along the shore. We

wondered what Miss Van was thinking, but G. G. said, "This will be a better education for you girls than a year at school." This encouraged us, for it showed that G. G. did not disapprove of what we had done. It was very romantic going through the forest, which was bright with autumn colours and afternoon sun. For a while we rather forgot the serious purpose of our being on the island, and enjoyed it as an adventure pure and simple.

On the way back, as we pushed through brambles and underbrush, Pandora was very gay about the happy evening we would have. We would sit round the big fireplace, and G. G. would talk to us, and Mr. Crockett would begin to soften. But alas, things proved very different. It was growing dark and the air was chilly, and to our dismay we found the old capitalist out behind the barn pretending to help the children dig. Of course it was sporting of him to help keep those youngsters amused, but at his age it was most rash. When we urged him to return to the lodge he replied sharply, and seemed very cross. In spite of the flaps, which were buttoned over his chest, he had evidently caught cold. He coughed a good deal, and looked to me a bit feverish.

G. G. built a big fire in the lodge, and we had supper. The twins cooked a sort of vegetable stew, which wasn't at all bad; and G. G. made

flapjacks. But we looked rather anxiously at our larder, which would soon run out. Pandora was worried about Mr. Crockett who had now smoked his last cigar and was very peevish indeed. We begged him to go to bed early, for we were really afraid he was falling ill; but he insisted on sitting beside the fire in a very argumentative frame of mind. Everything that any one said, he contradicted. The queer thing was that the only people he was at all pleasant to were those two incorrigible youngsters, Willie May and Jacqueline. He seemed to have taken a great fancy to them, made them sit beside him, and occasionally remarked, half to himself, that they were good hard-headed kids. "If they'd only been boys," he said grimly, "they'd have a future ahead of 'em."

By the time everything was cleaned up, we were so tired that we were all a bit quarrelsome. Willie May and Jacqueline, growing spoiled by Mr. Crockett's praises, became horribly fresh: they kept bursting into gales of laughter and giggling together in corners. Finally we forced them to go to bed, and they made a horrid rumpus about it. Then we had to persuade Mr. Crockett to do the same, and this required tact; but Pandora filled some empty bottles with hot water, and put them in his bed to act as foot-warmers. This pleased him, and he went.

We had an uncomfortable feeling that G. G. was disappointed in our behaviour, for he smoked his pipe rather pensively by the fireside while we wrangled. Also he kept rubbing his chin and asking us if we thought Hutchins had left a razor lying about. Edna said wistfully that in the Socialistic State there seemed to be so many chores to do that there was no time or energy left for intellectual discussions. G. G. said this was a very shrewd remark. But Pandora, like a true J. J. A., was not depressed. She came to me with very bright eyes and confided that she had found something that would be a great help to our noble purpose. She would not tell me what it was.

So at last we all said good-night. G. G. had learned, from the chatter of those children, our private nickname for Pandora. I noticed that he said to her "Good-night, J. J. A." in a sort of tender way, and I was pleased, because she was the only one of us who was really worthy of his manly nature.

It was high tide that evening, and just before going to bed the five members slipped down to the dock to have a wash in the clean salt water. We put the lantern on the beach and sluiced our hands and faces. Edna noticed a bottle floating close to the shore. We didn't pay any particular attention until we noticed there was a paper inside it. We took it out and read it. Evidently

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Jacqueline and Willie May had been at work, for we read the following ridiculous and badly composed statement:

*Lattitude Thatcher's Island—beutifull
damsles marooned on dessert island in terrible
danger, but treasure safe. P. P. P.*

Even more painful was our astonishment when Pandora, holding up the lantern, discovered a whole flock of such bottles floating about in the water. Several of these were near enough so we could seize them by wading. All contained similar ignorant and misleading compositions. Of course if these absurd things had been found by passing vessels, inquiries would follow. We resolved to severely reprimand the children in the morning. But the full meaning of this incident we did not yet suspect.

V

The next day, Wednesday, began like a Shakespeare play with "alarums and excursions." We woke to hear a great cackling and yelling behind the barn. G. G. was trying to catch a chicken, and of course Willie May and Jacqueline (who had been up and prowling since sunrise) had to assist by chasing the poultry hither and thither, mostly thither. G. G. finally slew two chickens,

with the axe, which made us rather sad. This bloodshed was hardest on the twins, however, as they, being the cooks, had to pluck the victims. This was rather a horrifying introduction to the stern facts of life; but G. G. thought that Mr. Crockett should have chicken broth for lunch. The old gentleman had a severe cold on his chest and really seemed sickly. We insisted on his staying in bed, for breakfast, and the twins tried hard to make his coffee nicely.

Everything was rather upset. While G. G. was struggling to milk the cow, we were alarmed to see a mysterious launch cruising along the shore in an inquiring way. It was full of men, and they were gazing at the lodge and our flag with opera glasses. We feared it might be the indignant Hutchins who had collected some of his rough companions and was coming to expel us. The launch came almost to the pier, and drifted about. We could see the men on board talking and arguing together. Pandora was very anxious for fear Mr. Crockett (who was in bed) and G. G. (who was communing with the cow) might see this vessel and attempt to escape. With her usual fearlessness she seized the fowling piece and the members ran to the edge of the cliff. She pointed the gun at them and we all assumed most threatening gestures. Of course we were really quite terrified; but the men on

the launch looked surprised. They started their engine and sailed away.

We made the mistake of urging Mr. Crockett to stay in bed and rest. If we had insisted on his getting up, he would probably have been keen to do the opposite. But presently, while we were all contemplating with horror the naked bodies of the slain chickens, he appeared, with his flaps carefully fastened over his chest. Both he and G. G. were now assuming a very grizzly air, not having shaved. Pandora said that hereafter, if any women were kidnapping men, she would advise them to take a razor along, as it helps to keep them civilized.

We all gathered in the sunshine in front of the lodge, and somehow I felt that we were approaching a kind of crisis. Mr. Crockett was very peevish about having nothing to smoke. Then Pandora sprang a surprise. She appeared with a box of elderly cigars which she had found somewhere in the lodge. This was what she had referred to so hopefully the night before.

When Mr. Crockett saw the box, his face brightened, and he put out his hand for them.

"No," said Pandora sternly. "Before we give you any cigars, you must agree to help us in our great vision for human welfare."

I shall never forget how splendid she looked, standing there, defying the old capitalist, her

face browned by the sun, her khaki clothes a bit soiled, her eyes very bright with high ideals. The other members broke into a cheer.

"Quite right!" cried the twins. Their gentle Atlanta blood had been a good deal hardened and embittered by their rough work in the kitchen. They too, usually so soft-natured, had caught the fighting spirit of our enterprise. With chicken feathers still adhering to them, they looked wild and shaggy.

"Promise us you will make a firm stand for disarmament," said Pandora, "and you can have a cigar!"

Mr. Crockett gazed in surprise at the group of P. P. P. His skull cap was tilted to one side and he looked very humorous and shrewd. He looked at G. G., who was laughing, as though for help. But G. G., in a very chivalrous way, said nothing. Besides, he still had a little pipe tobacco in his pouch.

"You young Amazons!" said Mr. Crockett. "I refuse to be bullied! Besides, they are probably Hutchins's cigars, and not worth smoking."

Of course, not knowing one cigar from another, we could not reply to that.

"Let me see what they look like, and then I'll tell you whether I'll accept."

But Pandora was firm. "No," she said, keep-

ing the box hidden behind her. "You must take it or leave it."

He burst into a loud fit of coughing, and patted his chest flaps with much pathos, but I could see that his eye was twinkling toward G. G., and he was making these bronchial sounds chiefly to play upon our sympathy. We remained sternly silent.

"I'll make you a fair offer," said he. "Give me one cigar to try. In return I'll listen to Mr. Evans's lecture on the socialistic state. I can't promise to be converted, but I'll listen most patiently."

G. G. said he thought this was very fair. But even he showed a little of the masculine tendency to bargain. He said that he would not deliver the lecture unless he also was given a cigar, as he was smoking his last pipeful. So Pandora gave them each one cigar, and ran off to hide the rest in a secret place. We felt much elated, because it was evident that in this box of cigars we possessed a powerful weapon for humanity. Mr. Crockett lit his at once. He then began to complain bitterly and said he had been tricked; he said they were unsmokable, but I noticed he kept puffing away.

We could not hold the lecture immediately, because G. G. had gallantly offered to clean the chickens, and then the twins would have to start

cooking the broth. Also, Jacqueline and Willie May returned shouting from one of their expeditions and made signs to Mr. Crockett who departed with them. He and those crude children seemed to be getting very chummy.

It was only too plain that we were now at a dangerous turning point in our crusade. The old capitalist was in a very uncertain mood, and much depended on the chicken soup and the cigars. We flung ourselves entirely into the soup. I mean, we all took a hand, and although rather ignorant of the proper way of cooking it, we gathered vegetables and chopped the fowls limb from limb, and stewed and stirred and laboured over it. Finally the twins got quite angry because we kept on taking off the lid and smelling and saying it was very thin. They accused Pandora of praying for its success, which they said was a kind of insult. Anyhow, you have no idea how long it takes to cook out the strength of a muscular chicken; and when you think it is beginning to smell right, you find that the liquid has all boiled away.

During these labours we could not help having some painful thoughts. It was very ominous that the only members of the party who appeared truly congenial to Mr. Crockett were those two silly children, who had no ideals, no visions, no interest at all in humanity. And even G. G. did

not seem nearly so keen on converting Mr. Crockett as we had expected. He roamed about in a restless way, and I saw him looking anxiously across the water. I wondered if he was worried about Miss Van Velsor discharging him. So once, when I escaped from the kitchen feeling very hot and troubled, I tried to encourage him. I said that he must not be worried, because if the worst happened I would write to my father and explain all and get it made up to him. He looked at me very queerly.

"That wouldn't quite be true blue socialism, would it?" he replied with a smile. Then his face changed. "Marjorie," he said, "you're a darling. You're all darlings. But I don't quite see how this junket is going to end."

I was tremendously moved by his beautiful speech. In fact this seems almost too intimate to put down except that I promised to write everything. No one of the other sex had ever spoken to me like that. My face got very warm, and my eyes felt uncertain, so I just turned and ran back to the kitchen and threw a lot of salt and pepper into the soup.

It must have been pretty late when the meal was finally ready. As we were so anxious about the broth, desiring it to have a strengthening effect on Mr. Crockett's chest, we were alarmed to see him coming back accompanied by the

children, with his flaps wide open. But to our relief he seemed stronger and in most cheerful mood. His face was pink with exercise, and he even snatched off his skullcap, saying he was warm. But we feared another chill and made him replace it and button up his flaps. We were all amazed at his good humour. He admired the soup, patted Pandora on the back, and said he was looking forward to the lecture. For once we were grateful to Jacqueline and Willie May for having kept him amused, and forgave them the ill-bred screams of laughter that quite marred their table manners. Mr. Crockett said, as he consumed his soup, that he could feel his chest growing stronger every minute. Although he was never able to be sure which twin was Fanny Kate and which was Annie Sue (something only their very intimates could be quite certain of) he praised them both; praised Edna's flag, praised Pandora's courage in bringing us to this exciting spot. If this was the socialist and radical state, he said, he approved of it. Pandora was so pleased by his good humour that she passed round the box of cigars without imposing any conditions. This was quite the happiest meal we enjoyed on the island.

Outside the lodge there was an open space among the trees which formed a sort of natural auditorium. Here G. G. built a fire, and we

spread blankets on the ground. We fixed the place of honour for Mr. Crockett, where he could sit comfortably with his back against a tree. G. G. occupied a stump, and we all arranged ourselves around the blaze to enjoy the coveted lecture.

It was an impressive scene, as the twilight gathered and the bonfire burned brightly. Now at last, we felt, we were attaining the object of our toilsome quest. G. G. spoke splendidly, telling of the dreams of liberals and poets; and how, in our own school, there had grown up this little band of devotees who hoped to carry some message of human truth to the rich and powerful. Even the two children were awed by the splendour of this occasion. Mr. Crockett sat very quietly leaning against his tree trunk, and we felt positive that G. G.'s manly visions were having much influence upon the important old man. But I cannot bear to dwell upon this scene when I think of the sad climax.

G. G. concluded, and we sat spellbound beside the red embers. Our hearts were glowing just like them, as we waited to hear Mr. Crockett nobly approve our cause. He also seemed impressed, for he remained in deep thought. Pandora touched him gently, and to our horror he fell over sideways. We clustered round anxiously, fearing his chest had weakened. We

reproached ourselves for having kept him out in the damp air. And then the wretched truth broke upon us. The unfeeling old man was sound asleep. Worse than that, when we leaned over him fearing some illness, a strong odour of intoxication filled the air. G. G. picked him up and carried him into the lodge. "I think," he said, "that it was Mr. Crockett who discovered buried treasure."

This gave us a sudden suspicion. Pandora sprang fiercely upon the two miserable youngsters who were the cause of all our troubles. Under fear of torture they confessed. They wept piercingly and cried that they were innocent of crime. The afternoon before, digging behind the barn, they had come upon a box, which at first they thought might be a chest of doubloons. Breaking it open, however, they found it contained twelve bottles of whisky. They were greatly disappointed, but thinking nothing of the liquor and only of their wild pranks, they emptied it all on the ground and used the bottles to set adrift their ignorant messages. They confessed that they had done the same with ginger ale bottles while we were on the yacht.

But then, they continued, while they were writing the messages, old Mr. Crockett found them and immediately recognized the smell that hung about the place. He seemed excited, and

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was dreadfully upset when they said they had emptied all the bottles for such a trivial purpose. He told them to dig further, saying that where one treasure had been found more might lurk. He himself took a spade and delved powerfully, urging them on with promises of rich reward. Nothing further was discovered, however, and when he saw us returning to the lodge he swore them to secrecy. He said that if they would dig again the next day he would recompense them beyond the dreams of avarice. They had done so, and had found another case—with the result now evident.

VI

Indeed that was a dismal evening. Yet little did we suspect that even darker events were brewing.

My heart bled for Pandora. I knew that her nature, being greater and more splendid than the rest of us, must be suffering even deeper pangs of disappointment. Indeed we were all in the dumps. While the dissipated old capitalist slept away his errors, and the disgraced children sulked in a corner of the living room, the J. J. A. sought me for a conference of misery. G. G., aided by Edna and the twins, was preparing a light supper of cold boiled chicken. To me the mere thought of poultry, alive or dead, was horrible after what we had been through.

Pandora was inclined to be indignant toward G. G. She thought that he had not been eager enough to convert the old capitalist. She said that it might all have been done before the fatal liquor was discovered. She had the fiery spirit of all great leaders and in this tragic disappointment she was naturally cast down. I stood up for the manly G. G., believing that he had striven bravely, and tried to console Pandora by telling her that Mr. Crockett would probably arise very penitent in the morning. After sinning in so undignified a way, he would be all the more ready to listen to reason. But in my heart I felt that our missionary work was probably doomed to failure. And the only thing still possible to bring matters to a happy conclusion was for Pandora to fall in love with the noble G. G. I could see that he adored her, but he was too polite to mention it. My mind was busy trying to think of some way to assist their gentler emotions. So I am greatly to blame for much of the unhappiness that followed.

As I say, it was a dismal evening. The supper was not a success. G. G. tried to reassure us, but we had an anxiety lest old Mr. Crockett might pass away in his sleep from the effects of his indulgency. He groaned now and then, dreamily. To add to the gloom, a fog came in from the ocean, and then another horrible groaning

boomed sadly through the air. In our nervous state we were frightened at first, and Willie May and Jacqueline cried that it was a whale. Pandora replied fiercely that it was only the foghorn at Orient Point. As we sat by the fire, first we would hear a groan from the foghorn, and then a heavy snore from Mr. Crockett. The kerosene supply was low, and to save it we had no light but the fire and some candles. Presently G. G. went out into the fog to see that all was secure for the night. Pandora was sitting by one of the candles writing some secret notes. I think she was drawing up a plan of campaign for the next day. Now I saw my chance. I made signs to the other members, who slipped off to bed. If Pandora and G. G. had a real tête-à-tête together, I thought, much happiness might result. I slipped outdoors, and saw that G. G. was standing pensively looking about. Then I went back. Pandora was alone in the living room. "G. G. wants to speak to you," I said, and pushed her to the door. I fairly shoved her out, and ran to our bedroom, a kind of little cabin with two bunks, which I shared with Pandora.

But to my horror I found that G. G. and Pandora were talking right outside the window. I could not help hearing them, but I dared not close the window for fear of disturbing them and

breaking off their precious communion. It was not honourable, I fear, but I listened. I was so anxious that they should console one another for their noble disappointments.

To my great sadness I heard Pandora reproaching G. G. for not having been more active in converting the old capitalist. He replied most kindly, saying that he had other more pressing responsibilities, that the safety of the whole party lay chiefly on his shoulders, and if anything went wrong he would be blamed. Pandora, rather unreasonable on account of her savage grief, blamed him for Mr. Crockett's vulgar conduct. At last G. G. grew angry. I heard him say something about a schoolgirl prank. Pandora replied fiercely. I covered my head in the blanket, for I could not bear to listen. Our two noble leaders were quarrelling, and what would become of us? It was too horrible. Then I heard Pandora rush back into the lodge. She burst into our room. I lay, pretending to be asleep. She flung herself onto the other bunk, and I heard her crying slightly to herself. I dared not speak for fear of making things worse. Outside in the fog G. G. was cursing to himself in a rather manly way.

I lay awake long after Pandora had gone to sleep. This new trouble was largely my fault. I now had the saddest forebodings of evil. The fog grew thicker, and the moaning of the fog-

horn made me nervous. When I did fall asleep I had nightmares in which we were just on the point of converting Mr. Crockett when Miss Van Velsor arrived in a launch with a tray of cocktails and distracted his attention.

I woke up from one of these dreams with a certainty of something being wrong. In the next bunk Pandora lay breathing quietly; but I could not help believing I had heard a launch. Whether this was true, or only part of my dream, I could not be sure, but I felt intensely awake. In the stillness I could hear the fog dripping off the trees. Then I heard someone moving in the living room.

Of course we all slept in our clothes, having no change of garments with us. Quietly, not to disturb the weary J. J. A., I slipped out into the big room, fearing someone might be ill. I found old Mr. Crockett groping about in the firelight.

"Are you ill?" I whispered.

He replied sternly that he never felt better, but was looking for a drink of water.

I went to the pump in the kitchen and got him some, urging him to return to bed. But he said he wanted to smoke a cigar. He looked so small and quaint and appealing in his disreputable dress suit and skullcap, and it seemed to me pathetic to see his flaps carefully buttoned across

his frail chest. Knowing where Pandora had hidden the box, I got him one, and could not reproach him for his degenerate conduct. I made him put on his overcoat and he sat down by the fire to smoke for a few minutes.

I went back to bed, rather less nervous. All was quiet, and I was about to fall asleep when I heard a sound outside. It was like a stone slipping on the cliff; I heard it bounce down the hill and clatter on the beach. If I had had sense enough I would have leapt up then and given the alarm, but I was drowsy. It was all my fault. I even heard a creak from the front door, but believed it was Mr. Crockett tiptoeing about. Then there was a sudden scraping of chairs, and I heard the old man say something.

I jumped out of bed and ran into the next room. My heart stood still with terror. There was Mr. Crockett struggling in the grasp of four horrible ruffians, one of whom was the dreaded Hutchins. I sprang to G. G.'s room, opened the door and shouted. At that instant one of the savage men grabbed me from behind. I screamed, and as I am fairly powerful I struggled furiously; but in a flash two of them had me and I was rushed outside, with a rough hand spread over my mouth.

Of course the lodge was in an uproar. Out of the corner of my eye, as they hauled me through

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the door, I could see G. G. spring from his room, and Pandora came running out with her hair flying, like a tawny lion. I heard a gun go off with a hideous crash, and I heard Jacqueline yell something about pirates. G. G. came storming into the fog and for a moment I thought the battle was ours. But two other villains appeared behind him and struck him down with a cowardly blow. It was all a kind of nightmare. I bit the hand of the savage Hutchins, and he and the other man holding me stumbled at the crumbly edge of the cliff. We all three slid down the hillside in a heap, and the rush took my breath away. Before I really knew what was happening I was shivering in a launch. Beside me, Mr. Crockett was gasping and croaking with rage, his flaps all undone. G. G. was struggling with three men who tried to tie him with a rope. At the top of the bluff I could see a dim light in the lodge and hear shouts and screams.

Mr. Kennedy says that this is the end of the present chapter.

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE
TOLD BY MELVILLE KENNEDY

PART THREE

NARRATIVE RESUMED BY MELVILLE
KENNEDY

I

THAT scene in the lodge is brightly painted in my memory. Tom Carmichael was in the doorway, barefooted, slimed with mud, his face shining with anger and exertion; the fire, blazing high in the chimney, lit up the figures of the girls; Pandora, distracted with trouble and remorse, was holding a wet dishrag with which she had been sopping my skull; the other youngsters stood in grotesque attitudes of amazement, appalled by the suddenness of the affair. I was still oppressed by a sense of vague disbelief: the only thing I was sure of, besides a vast weariness and an irrational desire to laugh, was that Pandora was safe. I put out my hand, and by force of old habit gently pinched the nape of her neck under her rumpled toss of bobbed hair.

“My dearest kid,” I said, “what on earth have you been up to?”

She turned a miserable tear-stained little face toward me, and began to say something, but Tom, shouting angrily from the door, cried for silence. We all listened; through the dripping hush of the fog we could hear the rapid mutter of a launch. Pandora burst outdoors, pushing Tom aside.

"Marge!" she called wildly into the darkness. "Marge! Oh, Marge!"

The shrill voice seemed swallowed up in the wet blanketing obscurity; yet, listening closely, we thought there was a faint answering scream.

"I suppose you see what's happened," said Tom to me. "Your friend Evans has got away with the old man and one of the girls."

Pandora turned on him furiously.

"Don't be so silly!" she exclaimed. "It's that Hutchins. I saw him. There were about six of them." Then she ran piteously to me. "It's all my fault; I brought them here, and we were going to be so happy. Now they've taken G. G. and Marjorie and poor old Mr. Crockett." She clung to me, sobbing.

One of the two smaller girls—the one I afterwards learned to be Jacqueline, a bony little creature, all knees and elbows, with a face almost as grimy as her khaki bloomers but a clear courageous eye—stepped forward, still clutching an iron poker. I wondered if it had been she, rather

than Pandora, who had given me that crack on the head.

"It's *our* fault," she asserted, apparently acting as spokesman for herself and the other urchin. "If we hadn't found the whisky Mr. Crockett wouldn't have been walking round in the middle of the night, and they couldn't have grabbed him."

This was Greek to me, but it didn't matter at the moment whose fault it was. I could see that Pandora was very wrought up, and I was really afraid she'd be ill.

"Uncle Melvy, what can we *do*?" she kept asking.

There was nothing we could do in that fog and darkness, and evidently the only course was to get the girls quiet and wait for daylight. I made them roll up in blankets round the hearth and set Tom brewing some coffee. Pandora lay curled up by my feet: her eyes were bright and pleading, rather like a dog's. Plainly she would not relax until we had some account of the situation. The Tareyton girl was the least upset of the lot, so I ordered Pandora to keep quiet and let Edna tell the story. In spite of my aching fatigue, I had a strong impulse to chuckle as Edna unfolded their naïve scheme. I could feel Pandora's anxious gaze upon me, however, and realizing how seriously she had plotted the whole

escapade I managed to remain grave. Poor child, she was desperately afraid of being reproached for the kidnapping of Mr. Crockett and Marjorie and the admired Evans. After all, if the blame was to be allotted, wasn't it as much mine as any one's for leaving the girl so much to herself? Yet, secretly, I couldn't help admiring her audacity and pluck. I reached down and patted her head, warm in the fireshine; she gave a little sigh of relief, rolled over, and fell suddenly asleep like a puppy. The responsibility of her Perilous Pioneers she evidently regarded as now laid upon my shoulders. Tom, who had been uttering snorts of disgusted disapproval throughout Edna's rather incoherent narrative, was already asleep in his chair. If it had not been for old Crockett, a frail ancient ill-prepared for these wild forays, I should have been more inclined to indulge my lurking sense of comedy.

But there was now no doubt that we were in a devil of a mess. I sat there in the firelight, surrounded by the innocent young snores of Tom and the Pioneers, trying to think it out. Obviously this fellow McGowan was running a smuggling commerce on a large scale; probably Hutchins was McGowan's tool; they had taken advantage of Huntington's prolonged absences to use the island as a warehouse; and now, alarmed by the inopportune arrival of Pandora's party,

McGowan had countered by seizing hostages. Perhaps he imagined that the camping visit to the island was an ingenious trick arranged by revenue agents to camouflage a raid. . . . And now, finding himself, by sheer chance, in possession of Mr. Crockett (booty even more valuable than innumerable schooner loads of Scotch) what would he do next? The rascal must have followed us from Eastern Point, smiling at our laborious passage by oars. . . . I began to feel a very healthy dislike for McGowan; he had taken unpardonable liberties with my boat. . . . The first thing in the morning we would go back down the beach for the dinghy, and I would send Tom out to hail some passing craft and get the girls back to the mainland. . . . The fog damp dripped from the eaves of the lodge with a steady ticking; there must have been an empty pan or something lying about, for I heard the soft tinkle of water falling regularly into a metal vessel . . . and the room grew warm . . . I was asleep.

Like all who are accustomed to roughing it, I can sleep calmly through storms and uproar; but there is one thing that will always rouse any man of open-air habit—the smell of food. And one sound, let me add, that is an unfailing alarm clock: the sharp sputter of frying bacon. It was to this cheering sound and a strong nip of coffee

in the air.that I came awake. Tom was still gargling away in his chair, but the girls were all on the move. I rather suspected from something in their manner that they had taken counsel together while we were asleep: they were very brisk and ready, and Pandora especially had quite recovered from the terrors of the night. The Southern damsels were busy at the kitchen stove; Edna was calmly setting out the table for breakfast; the two small vagabonds appeared with Tom's and my shoes and stockings which they had retrieved at the bottom of the cliff. When Pandora came in with a pail half full of fresh milk, which she said she had herself extracted from the cow, my amazement was complete.

"Well, Pan," I said, "there seems to be something in the Van Velsor education after all. Who taught you to milk?"

"I learned by watching Mr. Crockett," was her astounding reply. "Did you get some sleep?"

I hoisted myself stiffly from the chair.

"I did pretty well," I said, "except that you seem to keep brickbats in your furniture." I had been irked by something hard and sharp-edged, though too weary to remove it. Looking in the chair seat, I was surprised to find it empty. Then in my hip-pocket I discovered *Assorted*

Humbugs, and laid it on the mantelpiece. Pandora flushed a little when she saw it.

I shook Tom awake, and we sat down to eat. There was something almost uncanny in the matter-of-fact behaviour of the girls. They advised us to make the most of the bacon and coffee, as this was the last of them; speculated apparently quite calmly as to what Mr. Crockett, Marjorie and "G. G." were having for breakfast, and whether Mr. Crockett's flaps were buttoned. My mind was mainly on the question how soon the fog would burn off, or I might well have devoted some meditation to the Modern Girl as a type, for I began to wonder if I had not misjudged her. These supposedly pampered youngsters were conducting themselves like old campaigners. Only in Pandora's attitude toward Tom did I seem to gather that emotion lay beneath their Spartan composure.

"I can milk the cow," she said, "but you'll have to kill the chickens, Tom. G. G. used to do that for us."

Tom, who was rather morose, had never been careful about disguising his feelings.

"Ah," he said, "your Geegee seems a blood-thirsty fellow. Better at killing chickens than he was at fighting Germans."

This might well have precipitated a fierce altercation; but to my surprise Pandora made no

reply; and a fortunate distraction occurred. Fannie Kate had brought in the last skilletful of bacon, and while the others were talking Willie May seized the opportunity to get more than her share. This Jacqueline attempted to readjust by the simple expedient of diving her fork into Willie May's plate while the latter was not looking, and kidnapping a large slice. The resulting hullabaloo diverted attention from Tom's harsh sneer.

After breakfast, while the girls were cleaning up, and Tom was making a tour round the place to see what our resources were, I stepped out to the edge of the bluff to smoke a pipe and consider. I notice that really skilful writers take an opportunity to put in a bit of the picturesque now and then, and this appears the place for it. The fog, as I had expected, was evaporating fast, and the island shone in a warm pearly light as the sun grew strong. I have travelled much and kept my eyes open; but there is a tranquil beauty upon our North Shore of Long Island in October that I find specially satisfying. Each of those many indented harbours, where yellow and coppery woods run close to the water, has its own charm. Along the stony or sandy byroads, there is the crackle of dry leaves underfoot, the patter of dropping nuts and acorns, the drift of sweet smoke from brushfires is woven into the

very breath of the air. After chill October nights one relishes the sun at his true value; and wonders, as one goes out to enjoy his benevolent embrace, what miracle it is that in only a few weeks' elapse has tamed his power to such thin impoverished shining.

From our high vantage I could see westward over the flat sandspit of West Whisker, into the bight of Paumanok Bay at its widest. But even to the south, where the channel is only five miles across, the hazy visibility was cut off a little beyond the bell buoy where we had hung the night before. There were no craft in sight—nor did I expect to see any: pleasure-boating is mostly over by the end of October, when high winds and sharp weather make the big bay rather boisterous. Duck-hunters would be along the opposite shore, and most of the fishermen, going out toward the North Channel, would bear well away beyond West Whisker, to get a straight course for Orient Point. Behind the barn and the cleared fields our encampment was shut in by tall woodland where, among the cider-coloured thickets, climbing masses of Virginia creeper were spires of scarlet. I was amused to notice, though, that the loveliest colour in the landscape was Hutchins's cabbage patch, which lay in stripes of purple and lavender and pipesmoke blue. Among the vivid rows of these frostbitten vegetables I could see the two

small girls moving and bending. I suspected that some sort of boiled kale was planned for our next meal.

I was pondering the mingled absurdity and awkwardness of the situation, and especially Mrs. Ferry's probable anxiety at not hearing from me—yet, if we had been able to communicate, what could I have said?—when Pandora came out of the lodge. She approached, extending a box of very uninviting cigars.

"No, thank you, my dear," I said when she offered them. "Not as long as my pipe tobacco holds out."

She seemed a little disappointed at my refusal, and the idea crossed my mind that the offer was merely a tactful prelude to some proposal she had intended.

"How do you make cabbage soup?" she asked.

"I haven't a notion," I said. "Just boil them, I suppose."

"Chickens and cabbages are about the only grub we have left."

"I suppose Mr. McGowan is enjoying the supplies you put aboard the sloop. Well, we've got more urgent things to worry about than meals. I'm going down to get the dinghy. Then Tom and I will hunt some kind of boat to give you children a lift to Eastern Point. I can't have you all frolicking about here in the wilderness——"

"What!" she cried—"Ship us home while you find G. G. and Marge and Mr. Crockett? Oh, Uncle Mel, you *wouldn't*?"

"I certainly would," I retorted, a little angrily perhaps. "I'm not worried about Evans and Marjorie; they're young healthy creatures and can stand some roughing. But Mr. Crockett is old and frail, and a very important person. If anything happens to him, owing to this wild prank, you'll never forgive yourselves."

We were interrupted by Willie May and Jacqueline, who had seen us talking and came running from the cabbage field.

"Mr. Kennedy!" they exclaimed shrilly, "is it fair to make us do lessons in a crisis?"

This was evidently a grievance against Pandora, for their eyes carefully avoided hers.

"I told them," Pandora said, "that they must either do their prep. or else pick cabbages. This isn't a picnic; this is a very serious enterprise, and they forced themselves into it anyhow."

"But who ever heard of having school on a desert island?" the children protested. "Mr. Crockett said this was the place to hunt for treasure."

"What is the lesson?" I asked, trying to be judicial.

"Edna's been giving them problems in fractions," said Pandora. "But now we have a book,

I thought they ought to do some literature. I told them to memorize one of G. G.'s poems."

I managed to preserve my gravity.

"How *can* you memorize them?" appealed the victims. "They don't even rhyme!"

"Well, have a good go at the cabbages," I said. "We'll call it botany. Tom and I are going to get the dinghy."

They begged to come, but Pandora sternly ordered them back to the task, and I upheld her discipline. And then, as we turned toward the lodge, Tom's face appeared over the brow of the cliff. As usual, he was red with excitement, indignation, and haste.

"Hey!" he shouted. "The boat's gone."

II

This was so unexpected that I could hardly believe it until I had run down to the jetty, from which the whole bend of beach lay visible, down to the wooded knoll of East Whisker. The sweep of yellow gravel showed no dinghy. It was impossible that she could have drifted, for we had dragged her high and dry.

"She was pulled off," said Tom. "Her keel left a long groove in the sand. McGowan must have gone back for her after he grabbed the people here."

"In that black fog? When he didn't know exactly where to find her? Nonsense!"

"Well, she's gone anyhow. That's the thing that matters," he burst out impatiently. "There isn't another boat on the island, except that." He pointed to an old flat-bottom punt, with her boards stove in, that lay half full of water under the wharf.

"Well," I said, "we'll just have to patch her up. It'll do to row out toward some boat that's passing and wave to her."

"No oars," Tom grumbled.

"There are some oars in the lodge," said Pandora.

"In the meantime, I'll run up a signal on the flagpole," I continued. "It's the best we can do, till we get the punt fixed. I wonder what will look most like distress?"

"Something of Geegee's," suggested Tom. "His book of poems, for instance." He set off for the lodge to find some tools.

Pandora looked at me with an oddly stubborn expression.

"There's an old dory lying on the beach, on the west side of the island," she said. "I saw it in the distance, the other day when we were exploring with—with Mr. Evans. But I wouldn't tell Tom. —I didn't see it close to. It must have drifted in from some wreck, but it might be all right."

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She came closer and looked up at me, much as she used to when she was very small and had hurt herself in a tumble but didn't intend to cry.

"I know this is all my fault, Uncle Mel, but I'm going to make good. You see if I don't." She turned suddenly, and ran to the house.

There is something very humiliating about having to raise a signal of distress, but I saw no alternative. I found an old tablecloth, and a tin of green paint. I had one of the girls paint HELP on it in large letters, while I was tacking together a wooden frame on which to erect it. In the middle of this occupation there was a shout from the cabbage patch. Willie May and Jacqueline were pointing toward the bay. Near the bell buoy we could see a launch, heading out for the South Channel.

We all ran to the edge of the cliff, waving whatever came nearest to hand. Pandora had a blanket. Tom brandished a towel on the end of a stick. Edna kept raising and lowering the red flag on the pole. I fired my revolver into the air. The launch altered her course and came inward. Seeing that we were noticed, we scrambled down the hillside to the pier and waited. It was a small shabby craft with a loud banging exhaust, but at half a mile or so distance we could distinguish three men in her. Then, to our amazement, she turned parallel to the shore.

We could hear a tin horn blown, and see an apparently derisive waving of hands. They were making fun of us. They sheered away in a long curve.

"It's no use," I said, as the girls continued waving. "McGowan has passed the word round. They think we're revenue agents."

It is a queer habit of mine that even in the most lively and absorbing events I cannot help observing with a sort of dispassionate inward eye, which refuses to be bamboozled by my own desires in the matter and insists upon noting quaint or comic aspects. This, I dare say, is an unfortunate characteristic: it leads one to meditate when action might be more fruitful. At any rate, I almost forgot our disappointment because I was noticing how delightfully diverse were these various youngsters' unconscious "reactions." Edna, who is a tall scholarly-looking girl with spectacles, seemed least disturbed of the lot: after one pensive gaze she turned to Willie May and Jacqueline and began picking off the burrs with which they were sprinkled. The twins, deliciously soft and gentle creatures, had a way of looking mildly at each other in any moment of embarrassment or surprise: it was as though each found a sort of secret encouragement in contemplating her own facsimile. They stood gazing, so completely alike that I could almost have

imagined it was one girl looking at herself in an invisible mirror. To the two youngest, whatever happened was just one more excellent Adventure; they broke loose from Edna and ran swiftly back to the vegetable patch. Tom and Pandora were the more volatile members. Tom's shortness of temper, I began to suspect, was due to his mixed feelings about Pandora, whom he obviously adored and yet could not possibly understand. With an angry grunt he picked up his tools and went striding down the hill to the beach. Pandora wasted no time in comment of any sort. After a long look at the departing boat, her brown eyes very bright and determined in her sunburnt face, she turned back to the lodge. I watched her with a strange thrill of affection and surprise. The straight boyish figure suggested an odd mixture of resolution and pathos. This was not the child I had known before. I suddenly realized that in all these youngsters something new had come into the world—something almost incalculable, something joyously absurd, and yet something enormously precious. I pin my faith to the modern girl! She has life, and has it more abundantly. About my feet, in the warm grass, the crickets jumped and filled the air with a thin trilling. It all seemed a kind of dream, for a moment—one of those moments of intuition that do come to one

when life, in spite of its pangs and complications, extorts an unwilling admiration.

"Back to the cabbages!" said one of the twins, and they followed Pandora.

I finished putting up our HELP signal. Tom was grimly tinkering with the old punt, which was so rotten that it fell soggily in pieces wherever he hammered it. I followed the wood-road across the western leg of the island, to have a look at the dory Pandora had seen. Through thickets of fern and groves of birch the overgrown wheel-tracks led down to a little spit, a couple of miles from our camp. But the boat, though it looked sound enough from a distance, was only a shell. The whole of one side, which lay buried in sand, was smashed in. Even the punt, crazy as it was, was more practicable. Or would it come, I wondered, to building a raft? My sense of the absurd rebelled at the notion of having to set out appealing for help on a make-shift raft, on those very waters where I had so often cruised in comfort in the *Pandora*. My indignation at McGowan increased. Time was going by and we knew nothing of what had become of old Crockett. With increasing anxiety I made my way back to our headquarters.

A strong aroma of cabbage flavoured the sunny air outside the lodge. The girls had evidently spent a warm morning over the stove, and their

faces were flushed—whether with achievement or dismay it was hard to discern. Tom came up from the wharf just as I arrived: he had been calking the punt's new bottom with strips of cloth, and seemed confident that he would be able to make her navigable. We sat down to platters of boiled vegetables and a powerful extract which Pandora announced as cabbage soup. Willie May and Jacqueline were whispering together and I could see that their high spirits were irritating to the others. In the hope of leading them into harmless topics I asked a question that seemed innocent enough.

"How did the lessons go?" I said.

"We learned one!" they shouted, and burst into simultaneous declamation. Evidently they had rehearsed carefully, for the duet was well timed and clearly uttered. They chanted in unison an eccentric canto which I recognized as the prefatory piece in Evans' book:

*"o brilliantly assorted humbugs
humbug of fashion
humbug of tradition
humbug of This is the Way It Has Always
Been Done
let us pierce these humbugs
with the sharp needle of sincerity
and glaze them in a case for display."*

Pandora glowed rosily with vexation.

"That'll do!" she said tartly.

"Well, you told us to memorize one, didn't you?" they exclaimed with well-counterfeited surprise. And then they sang a further ditty, evidently their own devising:

"Hum, hum, hum,
Bug, bug, bug!
I smell cider
In a jug, jug, jug!"

Tom was quick enough to note Pandora's discomfiture. "What d'you call that stuff?" he said. "Literature? I call it tripe."

"It's poetry," insisted the relentless urchins, seeing their advantage. "It's in a book." Willie May jumped up from the table and produced the volume. "See, there it is."

Tom examined the page with distaste.

"Oh, some of Geegee's stuff," he said. "That's the bunk. I'd like to pierce *him* with the sharp needle of sincerity."

"Tom Carmichael, you hold your tongue!" cried Pandora angrily. "I suppose you don't think anything's literature unless it's dead. Something that's beautiful and true, just because it's different from what you're used to, why you can't get it at all. You're too crude."

I tried to intervene, but while I was checking some fuel-fanning remark that Jacqueline had on the end of her tongue, Tom had lost his temper entirely.

"Yes," he shouted; "I suppose it *was* pretty crude of Kennedy and me to horn in here and try to help you out. Nice kind of a crude mess your jolly old Geegee got you all into. That for him, I say." And seizing the unlucky little book, he chucked it into the hearth, where a few embers of the morning fire still smouldered red.

"Easy, there, Tom," I said; but Pandora was quick as a flash. She was at the fireplace almost as soon as the book fell, seized it from the ashes, and faced him with brilliant fury.

"Now you get this straight in your head," she said. "Mr. Evans had nothing whatever to do with starting this expedition, and if things have gone wrong it's not his fault. It's no one's fault but mine. Just because you've been tinkering with that dirty old punt, that doesn't give you the right to insult people who are so—so fine and splendid you can't even appreciate them. I won't have Mr. Evans blamed for what wasn't his fault at all. I started this thing, and I'll get it straightened out somehow."

Still holding the book she darted from the lodge, leaving us all—even Willie May and

Jacqueline, I think—somewhat aghast at this squabble. Tom mumbled something in a surly shamefaced way and avoided my eye.

I followed Pandora outside. I had half expected to find her in tears. Instead, her face was bright with excitement: she gave her head a toss and met me with a smile. It occurred to me that the girls' nickname for her wasn't so far-fetched after all.

"I'm sorry, Uncle Mel," she said. "But I've had an idea. Don't ask me to come back inside, I don't want to talk to any of them for a while. Just let me be alone, I've got a hunch. Take care of the book, will you? Put it in a safe place!"

She refused further explanation, and went down the path to the beach.

I took Tom aside and gave him a good talking-to, which he received very well, for I think he was ashamed of himself already. He returned to the pier to resume hammering at the punt. "I'll get her seaworthy by this evening," he said. "If she isn't, I'll put out in her anyway."

I could see that Edna and the twins were pretty well fagged, so I bundled them out of the kitchen and told them to go and sit on the bluff where they could keep an eye open for boats passing. The two smaller girls had returned to the cabbage field, for which they seemed to have

conceived an affection. From the back door, as I was setting things in order in the kitchen, I could see the old tumbledown barn, behind which were a few mounds overgrown with poison ivy and blackberry bushes, all that is still traceable of the original Thatcher homestead. Adjoining these was Hutchins's rather disorderly truck garden, beyond which the ground rises in a stony pasture toward the wooded hill that runs along the axis of the island. The whole view was drowsy in the autumn sunshine, with a warm buzzing of bluebottle flies at the window pane. Every now and then I looked out from the front of the lodge to scan the sweep of the bay, but there was no sign of a boat except far away toward the mainland. I was oppressed by a feeling of complete futility and impotence. Here I was, cleaning up a foul kitchen in a reek of boiled cabbage, no better than a charwoman: yet what else could we do? The sound of Tom's hammering rose faintly from under the bluff: I knew he would work better alone, having his own private indignations to purge out of his system. Presently I lit my pipe, took Hutchins's shotgun, and went up into the woods to look for some rabbits.

The surest way to encourage things to happen is to absent one's self from the scene. It is always just after you leave the office that the

important telephone call comes through: and there are many other evidences (it seems to me) that Chance doesn't like to act while you are watching her. I don't know that my ramble in the thickets really altered the balance of the situation, but certainly when I came back, carrying a couple of fat cottontails, about sunset time, events were beginning to move. From the top of the ridge, more than a mile from camp, I could see a wide view of the scene. Over toward the far side of the North Channel, a white three-masted schooner had come into sight. At that distance her movement was not discernible, but in the light westerly air she could hardly do more than keep steerage-way. But more interesting still, Tom had apparently carpentered the old punt into usable condition, for he was already pulling away from the little wharf. To reach the schooner was a long row indeed, for it meant first rounding the cape of West Whisker—nearly two miles from our pier—and then a stretch of several miles out into the bay. But the schooner was the only craft I could see in that whole expanse of sunset-coloured water. Unless the rotten old punt were really watertight there was a strong likelihood that she would founder long before Tom could get so far, and I paid mixed tribute in my mind to his determination and his rashness. I was a fool, I said to myself, to have

quitted the camp even for an hour or so: these children were all harebrained. And with Tom and Pandora at odds, each would goad the other into still wilder ventures.

I hurried down the slope, not taking time to follow the lumber trail that skirted the clearings, but pushing through tangles of scrub and briar. The western view was cut off as soon as I left the ridge, but the lodge and our own small bay lay under me like a map. From the chimney a thin drift of smoke rose and floated: by the flagpole on the bluff I could see one of the girls standing—Pandora, I thought, by something alert in her attitude. And in the purple rectangle of the cabbages, behind the barn, were still two small khaki-coloured figures—what the deuce did those young mischiefs find so interesting in the vegetables? I smiled a little to consider that probably Pandora had penalized them by imposing an afternoon of agriculture. And then, beyond the spit of West Whisker, shot a big gray launch, travelling fast. She had been hidden from me, both eye and ear, by the steep western slope of the island. I knew now that this was what Tom was going to meet. If the launch kept on her course, he could never get near her—but at that instant she turned inshore. A powerful craft: she left a long white wake in the ruddy water. Tom, a small black speck in the punt, was only a

mile away from her now. I saw him stop rowing and wait for her approach. So our advertisement of distress had been of some service after all.

I was crossing the field above the barn, the field grazed by Hutchins's cow, a creature with very bony hips and a face of faint surprise, when an astonishing thing happened. I was the only one to see it, and I have never been able properly to convey to the others the shock of amazement it caused me. Across this field as I stumbled along with the gun and the dead rabbits, I could see Willie May and Jacqueline bending over among the cabbages. They were at the lower end of the patch, adjoining a rickety lean-to cow stable that was built over one corner of the old manor-house foundations. And at the very instant my eyes were on them, and I was about to call to them the news of the launch, they disappeared. I mean exactly what I say—they disappeared. They vanished, dropped out of sight. And then, with a loud crackling and a heavy bang, the back wall of the cow stable leaned and fell.

I dropped the gun and the kill, and ran wildly across the pasture. Behind the barn was a crumbled crater of earth, mixed with cabbages, stones, broken bricks, and ends of timbers. In the bottom of this hole, half under a mouldy old plank, was a pair of legs protruding from the rubble.

III

The crash of the old shed's collapse brought Edna and the twins racing from the back door of the lodge. It was a dreadful moment: I leaped into the pit and tugged savagely at a tangle of beams. There had been an ancient pile of logs stacked up against the rear of the shed: apparently the roof of some forgotten cellar had caved in, partly by the weight of the logs and partly by the strenuous digging of the children. But these heavy logs that had caused the collapse also prevented a more serious accident. They had slid sideways, forming a buttress on which the débris of the shed rested. Pulling the rubbish aside we found Willie May lying under a triangle of logs, filthy with soil and badly bruised and frightened but not seriously hurt. Beside her was a large hole opening into darkness. I thrust my head in, fearing it might be an old cistern or something of that sort. I could neither hear nor see.

"Are you there, Jacqueline?" I called.

There was a scrambling sound below, in the dark, a faint sigh, but no word.

"Jacqueline!" I cried, with horrid anxiety.

"I'm sorry!" her voice replied. "My head's all wet."

"Where are you?" I called, much relieved—

and angry too, as one always is when eased of a painful fear. "As if we didn't have enough to worry about already——"

Her face appeared in the aperture, plastered with dirt, and bleeding from a gash on the forehead.

"I *said* we'd find the treasure," she yelped, her voice absurdly shrill with excitement. "Look here, doubloons, boxes and boxes of 'em."

"Stop poking me!" exclaimed Willie May, breaking away from the good-natured twins, who had been tenderly exploring her person with a vague notion of locating broken bones. She scrambled past me and began to climb into the opening. I collared her and gingerly crept through myself, sliding down a pile of loose earth.

It was evidently an old vault or cellar that still remained among the underpinning of the original house. Striking a match, I found Jacqueline rubbing her shins. Her breeches were nearly unseated by a prodigious rent, but she was cheerfully surveying a long pile of wooden boxes neatly stacked on the floor of the cave. There was no need to look twice. They were cases of whisky. Some of them had been smashed by the falling timbers, and the liquid was oozing out. Among the wreckage I could see that a flight of steps led up to a doorway, which (I supposed) was concealed in the cowshed. The walls, where the masonry was visible, were good old solid

brickwork—bricks imported overseas, I dare say, when the manor was built.

"Where's the treasure?" cried Willie May, craning through the opening.

"The treasure's here," I said, "but it belongs to the government, I'm afraid."

On top of one of the cases was an old pewter candlestick with a scrap of candle in it. I lighted this, and the other girls came scrambling in. I tied my handkerchief round Jacqueline's head, and as she begged to be allowed to examine the place I concluded she was not much damaged. After making certain that the rest of the ceiling was not likely to come down on us, I looked about. There was not only Scotch whisky, but also some cases of wine and champagne—all excellent brands. If Angus Huntington could only prove that this has been here since before prohibition, I thought to myself, perhaps the government will have no right to confiscate it? Certainly it would be a handsome addition to his private stock.

Edna, always the most Martha-minded of the Pioneers, was horrified at Jacqueline's condition, and besought her to reunite her divided garments. Willie May complained of a headache; and both children, once they were aware of the disappointing fact that the boxes contained only liquor, not the imagined ingots and moidores, felt somewhat shaken; and truly they must have had a severe bump.

"Take them back to the house and put 'em to bed," I said. "But first give them a good washing. They're grimed from head to foot. And by the way, where's Pandora?"

"She was out by the flagpole watching Tom—she saw a boat coming," said one of the twins.

I climbed out of the cellar and hoisted the girls after me. Willie May and Jacqueline seemed very depressed, and I wondered a bit anxiously whether they were more badly hurt than I had thought. But, this crisis over, my mind had returned to the launch. I hurried to pick up the gun and the rabbits where I had dropped them, and then ran to the lodge. By this time I should have learned not to be surprised by anything, but I confess I was taken aback to see that the power boat, instead of being tied up at our pier (as I had rather expected) was under way in the opposite direction, heading out toward West Whisker with a gleaming swathe of white water behind her. Was she off for help? Perhaps a company of strangers, eager to assist, were even now coming up from the landing? I ran to the top of the path, and met Tom, dripping wet, doggedly climbing the hill.

"What on earth?" I began——

He was even too disgusted to be vehement. He stood there, water trickling from his clothes.

"Well, where in thunder have *you* been?" he

said. "Of course you had to hide yourself just at the wrong time."

This was the gist of what he told me. He had been hard at work mending the punt and saw Pandora coming along the beach. She was walking briskly, as though she had some scheme in mind. He was feeling a bit ashamed of having been surly, and tried to tell her so, but she cut him off sharply. "You attend to your business and I'll mind mine," she said. Coming up the hill to get some more screws, a bit later, he saw her in the cabbage patch talking to the two children. A little later he had heard the noise of the launch: he had looked for me, but without success. The punt was not really watertight, but he determined to make a try anyhow. Pandora shouted something to him from the top of the hill, but he didn't wait. He grabbed the oars and pulled for all he was worth, hoping to get far enough out to hail the boat as it passed the point. The launch turned inward, however, coming right toward him, and he waited, bailing the punt with a can. To his amazement she ran right by him without paying any attention. She was a big speedboat, torpedo built, shabby-looking but fast, and one of the men in her was McGowan. She ran alongside the pier, where he could see Pandora standing. He couldn't understand why no one else appeared—neither any of the other

girls nor myself. He turned back, rowing as hard as he could. He was still half a mile from the landing, and couldn't see clearly, but apparently one of the men got out of the launch and stood talking to Pandora. After a minute or so—he insisted that the time was very brief—Pandora got into the boat, which then backed away from the pier. She came racing along directly toward him, and he was desperately wondering what he could do. Was this yet another abduction? He could see Pandora sitting on top of the cabin, apparently under no duress. As the launch approached she shouted to him, "It's all right! Tell Uncle not to worry!" McGowan at the steering wheel, and with a malicious grin, passed so close to him that the punt was upset in the wash. She sank, and he had to swim to the nearest point of the beach, a couple of hundred yards.

"And that's that," he concluded; "and quite enough too. This business is by me. I don't get it."

We stood watching McGowan's boat, which swung sharply round the cape and headed, with that businesslike air that high-powered launches have, across the widest diameter of the bay. There was something specially trying in knowing that Pandora was aboard her and yet totally beyond our power of communication or our guess as to what was forward. Away across the water,

a long five miles at least, I could dimly see the sails of the schooner in the gathering dusk. Tom's face was very wretched, and he began to sneeze. The evening was growing cool.

"Get back to the lodge and make up a fire," I said. "I don't want any more invalids on my hands." I told him briefly how Willie May and Jacqueline had fallen into the cellar.

"But what the devil did Pandora mean by cutting off like that?" he said dolefully. "They didn't make any attempt to force her. I was watching carefully. She just hopped aboard and off they went. She was as cheerful as possible when they skimmed by. I think she was rather tickled to see me capsized."

"Did you say she was talking to Willie May and Jacqueline in the cabbage patch?" I asked.

"Yes, for quite a while. They were still at it when I came out of the barn with the screws I'd been hunting for. Somehow I got the idea she was bawling them out for something, not just for some mischief, but something important."

"I believe those two children know more about this than they've told us," I said.

But what indeed was Pandora's motive, I wondered as I followed Tom up the path. My life has been curiously untouched by feminine association, and I can say (what perhaps few men can) that since my boyhood no woman has ever

exerted any sort of active influence upon me. If I had always privately been inclined to smile at those men—we all know the type—who pretend that they are specially adept in “understanding” women, it was not that I doubted the variety of their experience, but that I doubted that there was really anything specific to understand. Yet in this mere youngster, my niece, I had suddenly and surprisingly become aware of a new and rather puzzling magic. I remembered her face as she stood outside the door after the quarrel with Tom. There was something rememberable, some subtle air of decision. What a poem she was, I found myself thinking—unspoiled, unshamed, undrilled in the world’s tough ways, and running with eyes of glory toward what she dreamed was lovely. It made me feel a bit old.

IV

Willie May and Jacqueline were rather luxuriating in a sense of being the centre of attention. They had been hastily but effectively scoured, and were sitting by the fire clad each in a blanket while the soft-hearted twins were heating up another consignment of the now familiar cabbage soup. Jacqueline had a bandage on her forehead, and Willie May was proudly exhibiting contusions on what she described as her “lily-white shin,” though that member was more the

colour of pale coffee. Willie May also was overheard to say that she felt faint, though I believe this was only an intuition of impending disclosures. At any rate, when Tom, also wrapped in a blanket, appeared from the alcove he had taken as his own, and unceremoniously shouldered them from the hearth where he spread his clothes to dry, they were too wise to offer protest. The departure of Pandora was a turn of events that quite took the wind out of their sails, and when they kept saying that they thought they had better go to bed, I began, unexpectedly, to disagree with them.

I was about to begin questioning when Edna herself, who was greatly upset by Pandora's unannounced exit, opened the matter.

"Jacqueline," she said, "what was Pandora saying to you two down in the cabbage patch this afternoon?"

Jacqueline looked uneasy, and said that her head hurt her. But by this time even the placid twins had got their dander up, and one of them—I was never sure which was which—went for her small sister.

"Now look here, Willie May Jones," she insisted, "you'd better come out with whatever's on your mind or you'll have a worse misery than you've got already. I reckon we-all have been too easy with you."

Willie May and Jacqueline looked at me, but found no comfort.

"Your sister is quite right," I said. "What was the conference in the cabbage patch?"

Even *in extremis*, however, it was not like them to be drawn out without making it as hard as possible.

"We were talking about footprints," said Willie May.

"Whose footprints?"

"Mine and Jacqueline's."

"What did your footprints have to do with it?"

"Pandora saw them on the beach. Where the boat was."

This interested Tom. "Do you mean the dinghy?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jacqueline. "You went up there and never noticed them."

"Now listen, children," I said, getting impatient. "This isn't a law court. You two are just as fond of Pandora as we are. We're all worried about her, as well as about old Mr. Crockett and Marjorie, and Mr. Evans. We want to know why she slipped off like this, without telling us. If you know anything that we don't, you ought to help us."

"Pandora told us not to tell anything; she said if we did we'd lose our share of the treasure."

Tom was about to interrupt with some caustic remark, but I stopped him.

"If there *is* any treasure," I said, "you and Willie May shall have your fair share of it."

"Well," said Jacqueline, "we got up very early this morning, and we saw your shoes and stockings, yours and Tom's, down on the beach, and then we saw the rowboat pulled up on the beach, oh, about a mile down. We went down to wash and get your shoes and stockings and then we thought, as everybody else was still asleep and some of them snoring so loud that we'd go away a little bit and have some peace. We walked down the beach to look at the rowboat and while we were there we got to thinking about pirates and the first thing you know we heard a motor boat coming along. And then, partly for fun, and partly because we really were scared after last night, we hid behind the boat, lay down in the sand so they wouldn't see us, whoever it was."

"And then," cried Willie May, "you said 'Damnation, they're coming after us!'"

"It wasn't a curse," hastily explained Jacqueline. "We had an agreement that her name was 'Damnation' and mine was 'Judas Priest,' and if we said those things we were simply calling each other by our names, and not cursing. We got the names by listening to Tom last night."

"Very well," I assented, only wishing to get

at the nucleus of the story. "You weren't cursing."

"The motor boat came right up close, we could hear the engine stop and some men jumped out into the water and waded in and came up to the dinghy. Then they found us and they were as surprised as we were. They call to a fat kind of man and he came ashore too and asked us questions. He wanted to know if there were any revenue officers along, and we said we wouldn't tell him. We thought if we said that, he'd think there *were*, and it'd frighten him. He asked what we were all doing here anyhow, and we said that the rest of them were here to convert Mr. Crockett to economical idealism but that Willie May and I were more interested in buried treasure. We asked him if he was a pirate and he said he was. We asked him if there was any treasure on the island, and he said we could bet there was. Hutchins, who was there, said that we were a bunch of wild women and they're kidding you, Jerry, but the big man said he was going to take away the rowboat any way to make sure we didn't spill the beans to the federal gang. And he said that economical idealism was a hobby of his, too, and that he had old man Crockett at his hang-out and was going to pump him full of it. We begged him to see that Mr. Crockett's flaps were kept buttoned and to our intense relief he said

sure, that it was a privilege to meet up with a man like Mr. Crockett and that the old gentleman knew a lot about piracy he would be worthy listening to on the subject. But anyhow he said he would disregard his natural pleasure in Mr. Crockett's society and return him safe to the picnic grounds providing we would give our word not to tip anything off to the revenue agents. And he said we'd mighty well better keep this to ourselves and find out what the party intended to do and he'd come over to-night for an answer."

Jacqueline had warmed up to her recital, so much so that her blanket was slipping off and had to be replaced by the distressed Edna. Plainly the two small girls had brooded all day over their adventure, and its flavour had lost nothing in their ardent recollection. Willie May, growing jealous, cut in while Jacqueline was being redraped.

"And he wanted to know if we were really friends of Mr. Huntington's," she piped, "and I told him our club was friends of almost everybody who was really influence and that the leaders of the expedition were a juvenile Joan of Arc and an author of Assorted Humbugs and he said Oh my Creator he said what have we got into, Hutch, a bunch of absolute goobers? Well anyway, he said, I can see you two are all right, you are hardboiled like I am and interested in piracy,

keep this meeting to yourselves and I'll make it worth your while. You can hunt for that treasure, but you won't find it till all's blue unless I tip you off, then he laughed and said I guess I near gave it away then, hey Hutch, that's good, you won't find it till all's blue, give me your word the federal gang don't hear of this, he said, and I'll turn over the captives, but if this gets about among the gossips then I'll have to hold innocent parties for ransom and you'll all stay on the island till your skulls bleach in the moonshine. And let's see, what happened next . . ."

Jacqueline saw her chance, and promptly regained the floor.

"Well, they pulled the dinghy down to the water and got in it and all got in the launch and went away. We sat on the beach for a while thinking it over and we decided that the only safe thing for us to do was to keep quiet until they came back at night, then we could perhaps arrange some sort of an ambush and get the better of them by stratagems. In the meantime we tried to think of some likely place for the treasure, as he had confessed that he had nearly given away the secret. We came back along the beach and carried up the shoes and stockings and as we came over the edge of the cliff we had a great idea. You can hunt till all's blue, he said, well, what was the bluest thing around here? At first we

thought of the water, and feared it was sunk on the bottom of the bay, but then we noticed that cabbage field, as blue as could be, and Pandora overheard us saying something about cabbages and she sent us to pick some and we spent most of the day digging around there."

"We had a sort of suspicion," said Willie May, "that if there was anything hidden it'd be at the end of the field near the barn because that was where we had found the box that time we were digging with Mr. Crockett."

"But why on earth didn't you tell us all this before?" asked Tom.

"How could we," said Jacqueline, "with that threat hanging over our heads? Besides, if we hadn't found the treasure by supper time we were going to ask Mr. Kennedy, in private, what to do. They said they weren't coming back until night. Then Pandora suspected. She had been watching us kind of sharp, and I guess maybe she heard us say something about the dinghy, anyhow after lunch she went up the beach to where the dinghy had been and she noticed our footprints in the sand. She said that Tom had been all along there and never noticed them because he was a big boob, but when she saw them she came straight back and asked us outright what we had been doing there. We had to tell her, of course, and then she looked very bright and cheerful the

way she does when she has a new idea, and she cursed us to appalling secrecy. That was only a little while before we fell into the cellar, and I guess she saw that launch coming along soon afterwards."

She paused, settled her blanket about her shoulders, and sat gazing into the fire with an air of conscious satisfaction, almost as if expecting a round of applause.

"Well," said Tom, "I think you were a pair of simpletons not to have said something about this sooner. If we'd known they were coming back we could have been ready for them. And now they've got Pandora too. They must have faked up some message or other to get hold of her. A nice mess, two young girls at the mercy of that gang of hoodlums."

"G. G.'s there," said one of the twins loyally. Tom made an eloquent gesture of disgust, which was marred, however, by the sudden perilous sliding of his blanket. Hastily he recovered it and sat by the hearth in sombre silence, his back to the rest of the group.

"The launch that took Pandora was the same one that you saw this morning?" I asked; but then remembered that Willie May and Jacqueline had not seen the boat in the afternoon. But, at any rate, judging by the description they gave, the man they had talked to was McGowan.

"Do you suppose what he said to the children means that he'll come again to-night also?" I said to Tom. He shrugged his shoulders in silence.

The only thing to do, tired as we were, was to keep watches, on the lookout for a boat. It was a quiet night, and certainly no craft under power could approach the island without our hearing her. The girls were all glad to turn in, after we had had a rather meagre snack—no one had the hardihood to suggest that we go to the trouble of cooking the rabbits. I took my nap first, thinking that once Tom got to sleep he would be very hard to rouse. I told him to turn me out at midnight; and I tumbled into a bunk. Through the partition I could hear Willie May and Jacqueline comparing notes on the adventures of the day, for in spite of their various excitements they were still full of energy.

"I'll bet there *is* something or other hidden in the cellar, besides that old hootch," said Willie May's voice.

"Sure there is, I'll bet it's jewellery or maybe some silver plate," replied Jacqueline. "You heard him speak of *treasure*, didn't you? Nobody would be silly enough to call a lot of old drinks *treasure*. We'll have a look in the morning."

I said to myself that I must remember to for-

bid them fooling around that hole, very likely the rest of the roof would come down on them . . . and then, while I was speculating on what might be accomplished if the endless energy and enthusiasm of the early 'teens could only be turned into some useful channel, my mind slipped over the edge into sleep.

Tom shook me awake, zealously enough, at twelve o'clock. I went outside, and immediately I felt that the weather was getting ready for a change. It was still clear and calm on the bay, but there were no stars and I could hear a going in the treetops that suggested a shifting of winds overhead. There was a sodden chill breathing up from the water. Tom and I had built a big bonfire on the bluff, which must have been visible all over the bay if any one had cared to bring us assistance. I could see the light on the Eastern Point breakwater: it struck me that McGowan must have that village pretty well under his thumb for no investigation of these queer doings to have been made. Off to westward I could make out a spark that I took to be the riding light of the schooner. I replenished the fire and sat near it with my back to a tree. My pipe tobacco was exhausted, and I had recourse to one of the cigars Pandora had offered—weeds acrid enough to do good service in keeping me awake. The glade was very quiet; the whimpering of a few late

PANDORA LIFTS THE LID

crickets was the only sound beside that soft foreboding rumour in the upper air. In the living room of the lodge a kerosene lamp was burning, and the brightness shone out through the open door.

I don't know just why I had got it so firmly fixed in my head that the only possible approach to our camp would be by water. Keeping a sharp ear cocked for sounds on the bay, I must have been neglectful of small snappings and rustlings among the trees. Certainly I thrilled with a sudden tingle of alarm when I heard a footstep in the darkness near the lodge. I turned round, and saw the silhouette of a man against one of the windows of the house.

END OF PART THREE

PART FOUR
TOLD BY MARJORIE CONWAY

PART FOUR

NARRATIVE RESUMED BY MARJORIE
CONWAY

THERE was a stuffy little cabin in the boat; into this they rudely shoved Mr. Crockett and me. The only light was a lantern in the cockpit of the launch, but I was too confused, in the fog and excitement, to see just what was happening. At any rate, they didn't find it so easy to get G. G. aboard. His manly instincts were flaming high; there was a terrible scuffle at the edge of the pier; I could hear mutterings and blows. I wished Pandora could have been there to see what a ferocious fight he made; but finally three or four of them all tangled up together rolled into the boat with a crash and I heard exclamations of suffering. They got a rope round G. G.'s powerful legs and dumped him into the cabin. In the mix-up the lantern had got trodden on, and as the cabin doors were shut we three were quite in the dark. The engine started at once. It was in the cabin with us and the noise

was great. I was almost afraid to stir for fear of getting into the flywheel or something. As the boat began to move I thought I heard Pandora scream, but I couldn't be sure. I felt great sorrow in my mind, more for her than for any one, and in a sense of shame at being forced away from our leader at this dangerous crisis of our affairs.

The cabin was damp and smelly, a mixture of engine smells, whisky and stale bacon grease that made me feel quite ill. Then I heard Mr. Crockett cough, and I put out my hand in the darkness. The best I could do now, I thought, was to take care of him and see that he came to no tragic end. I found his arm.

"Where is your overcoat?" I said. But the engine made so much noise he didn't hear. He must have lost it somehow in the conflict. "Are you all right?" I shouted in his ear. He mumbled something, I couldn't understand what. I was dreadfully afraid that he might think this brutal episode was a part of our campaign for converting him, so I began trying to explain that this was not the P. P. P.'s doing, but an unexpected calamity.

"This isn't part of our plan," I yelled in his ear. "This is a surprise."

I repeated it unsuccessfully several times. Finally he lit a match, as though believing he could hear better if we had some light.

"This is a surprise!" I shouted again.

He looked at me as though he thought I was mad. Certainly his own appearance was very wild and ancient. His skullcap was gone and the buttons had been torn off from his flaps. Lying on the bench across the cabin was G. G. His legs were snarled up in a rope and his head was bleeding. He seemed half dazed and his dark eyes looked curiously at me. He opened his mouth two or three times without speaking, and shifted his head as though he wasn't quite certain whether it still fitted his neck properly.

"That you, Marjorie?" he said sleepily. "Are you all right? If you can get this rope loose I'll see if I can smash their spark plugs; that'll fool them."

The match went out, and Mr. Crockett struck another. I was awfully afraid that G. G. had received some immortal injury and in spite of my respect for him I would have put my hand on his brow to see if he was feverish. But just then the cabin door opened, a light switched on in the roof, and in came a big stout man with reddish hair. This, we learned afterwards, was Mr. McGowan, a very famous criminal, known to his friends as Jerry. Later, when I got accustomed to his way of talking, which was quiet but full of ideas, I found him an interesting personality. But then, of course, I was frightened.

But there was no time to think at that moment, for he looked at us in great astonishment, even in alarm. He touched a lever that made the engine run less noisily.

"Holy mackerel!" he said. "It really *is* Crockett! And what's this? Why, infernal regions." (I am doing what G. G. used to call paraphrasing in the happy days of our Advanced English Composition.) "Infernal regions," he cried, "here's a girl with 'em."

He turned and shouted fiercely over his shoulder, and the uncouth Hutchins peered into the cabin. He was a tall, bony creature with a very uncultivated face.

"Hey, you fool," McGowan exclaimed, "what's this nonsense? It's Crockett himself. I thought those revenue fellows were kidding you. And what's the girl doing in this crowd?"

Hutchins was surly.

"Well, I told you, Jerry, you wouldn't listen to me, you're so bullheaded. Besides, how the devil did we know *what* we were getting, in that fog? She pretty near bit my finger off, anyways."

McGowan looked at us savagely. "Well, say, this is a queer business," he said. "Maybe I tumbled into a fortune just by accident. Mr. Crockett, you'd ought to be grateful to me for getting you off that island, it's a mighty unhealthy place

for evening dress parties this kind of weather. Why, you wicked old villain, I could sell this to the papers for a million bucks."

Mr. Crockett was still coughing and shaking from his violent slide down the cliff. He said nothing, and I could see that his silence disturbed our captor. And G. G. seemed half stunned. It was up to me.

"Don't be so vulgar," I shouted, hardly knowing what I was saying. "If Mr. Crockett catches cold you'll be terribly punished. It wasn't an evening dress party at all, it was education." I think I must have looked as though I was going to hit him, because he stepped back in surprise.

"Easy, easy," he said. He looked thoughtful for a moment, and then seemed more decisive. He took down a dingy overcoat that was hanging in a corner of the cabin and slipped it on Mr. Crockett. I was glad of this, but the old gentleman's appearance was not improved. It was an old army coat of olive drab, stiff with dirt, the bronze service buttons still on it. There was an oilskin sou'wester hat lying on the floor, and I made Mr. Crockett put this on to keep his head from getting draughty. McGowan looked at G. G., who was lying quite speechless. No one said anything for a while, and it was quite embarrassing.

"Well," remarked Mr. Crockett, "what's it all about?"

"I'm sorry to have taken you by surprise this way, Mr. Crockett," said McGowan. "But I think I can make you comfortable. Of course it won't be like Swanakha, but we'll do our best."

He squatted down by a little cupboard at the forward end of the cabin, took a key out of his pocket, and began to fit it in a padlock. Then my heart stood still, for behind his back the unconquerable G. G. was softly rising to a sitting position. I could see by G. G.'s face that he was going to make an attack on our captor, and if I could say something to keep the man in conversation G. G. might be able to deal him a crushing blow.

"Mr. Crockett's chest is weak," I said desperately, "and if you allow him to take cold the consequences might be serious."

"That's just what I'm thinking, young woman," remarked this strange person. And then he turned quickly.

"No, you don't," he said, roughly pushing G. G. back onto the bench. "The friendlier we make this little party, the happier we'll all be. There's nothing to make such a fuss about. But important interests have to be protected. No one knows that better than Mr. Crockett."

I saw now that there was a mirror in the panel

of the cupboard, and he had seen G. G.'s threatening movement.

He opened the door and took out a dark bottle and some glasses.

"A little brandy," he said, pouring out some and handing it to Mr. Crockett. "I drink mostly cider myself, but this stuff has its uses. It's best French liqueur, Mr. Crockett, the same as you serve at Swanakha. I know, because the fellow who supplies you gets it from me."

Mr. Crockett took the little glass and drained it. He said nothing, but his eyes were quite watchful under the brim of his fisherman hat. McGowan gave G. G. and me some of the drink also.

"When you're cold and wet," he said, "or when you're down in your mind and feelings or woke up sudden-like in the middle of a foggy night, it's a good tonic, it makes the juice move around in your stomach, and I always say if a man keeps his juices moving he's all right. When you're young it don't matter, but when you begin to get old you think about these things."

It was like a liquid bonfire, but I was glad to wash out the taste of Hutchins's hand from my mouth, it was a large hand with a sort of fish-and-farmyard flavour.

"Now," continued McGowan, "I haven't been introduced to these younger folks, and as maybe

we'll spend several days together we might's well be social. I'm going to take this rope off, because among gentlemen that kind of thing makes conversation difficult." He unfastened it, and G. G. sat up stiffly, feeling his head.

"Look here, you," he said slowly, "I suppose you're a bootlegger of some sort, but I warn you you'll be getting yourself into pretty bad trouble. You seem to know Mr. Crockett. Well, my name's Evans, I'm a teacher at Miss Van Velsor's school at Marathon, and those girls are all the daughters of very well-known people. They're on a—a sort of camping trip, and I'm in charge of them."

"Queer ideas these modern educators got," said McGowan calmly. "And by the way, son, you got me wrong. I'm not a bootlegger, I'm an importer. Owing to prejudices on the part of the gov'ment some of my business has to be carried on in an informal kind of way, but then I dare say Mr. Crockett may have had the same experience in his field. Will you have a little more brandy, Mr. Crockett?"

"Thank you, no," said the remarkable old man calmly. "And by the way, I think you have the advantage of me, Mr. Importer. I haven't heard your name mentioned?"

"My name's McGowan," he said, "Jericho McGowan. I do a pretty fair business in the line

of hotelkeeping and heavy hauling, over to Eastern Point. Then I have sidelines. You'd be surprised to know how many of the big folks I deal with one way and another, though sometimes they don't know it. Your Mr. Bealings knows a telephone number, down in the Cræsus Building, that I could mention if I had a mind to."

The name Bealings didn't mean anything to me, but I noticed Mr. Crockett look up sharply.

"Ah," he said. "So you're a business man, Mr. McGowan. I see you also have a sense of humour. That's a great drawback in trade. Many a good man has been spoiled for big business because he gave way to a sense of humour."

"Well, now," said McGowan, "we won't argue just at this minute. I'm agoing to run you folks across the bay to a little place I'm fond of, and by and bye we'll talk turkey. As for the young lady, I didn't intend for her to be along, but she'll take us as she finds us. If they will wear pants, why, people are likely to make mistakes, in the dark. Doesn't any one want more of the medicine?"

He put the bottle and glasses back in the locker, and turned to the door.

"Mr. Evans," he said, "don't get to being silly with them spark plugs the way I heard you mention, because that would only keep us out here in the damp that much longer, and it's bad for

Mr. Crockett's cold. Besides, this is a busy night for me. These foggy evenings are useful, and I have to get around lively. Just sit pretty and we'll be there in no time. Make yourselves comfortable and I'll put out this light."

I was afraid that G. G. was in pain, but before I could do anything we were in the dark again, and the roar of the engine increased to full speed. Mr. Crockett and I sat huddled together in a corner of the bench. What he was thinking, I don't know, but my feelings were all with Pandora, now left alone on that island with the burden of the nourishment and safety of the party including two irresponsible children, and the sad knowledge that our noble plan had broken down. I felt sure, too, that she would brood over her quarrel with G. G., and would be worried about Mr. Crockett. I know it isn't quite fair to pray about such things, but I did pray that our brave leader might prove equal to this dangerous situation. Once I looked out of the little porthole that opened into the cockpit, but it was too dark for me to make out how many men there were or what they looked like. I noticed that not even the red and green side lamps were lit.

Travelling in the dark it is hard to tell how time passes, but I don't think it was very long. I was trying to use my wits, so I could report properly to Pandora when we should be reunited. So,

though Mr. Crockett fell asleep (I could hear his rumbling snore close to my ear, as we sat together) I kept myself awake. I knew that we had not gone out into the Sound, for if we had I would have felt the boat rock. Therefore we must be still somewhere inside the bay. Presently—perhaps it was half an hour, perhaps an hour, it seemed tremendously long—the engine slowed down. I could see a light outside, shining dim in the fog. There was a voice shouting hoarsely, “That you, Jerry?” I heard McGowan say, “All right.” Looking out of a port I saw a rowboat come alongside, with a man in it. McGowan said, “Any news of Phyllis?” The man in the boat answered, “No, she ain’t passed O.P. yet.” McGowan said, “Well, it’s pretty thick. Pass the word to Phœbe.” These remarks encouraged me, for I believed that wherever we were going there would be girls there. Phyllis and Phœbe, these were pretty names, I thought, for people who associated with such rough persons.

Then for a while the launch moved slowly on, the engine running gently. Mr. Crockett woke. G. G., who had been quiet all this while, asked what the time was. Mr. Crockett struck a match and looked at his watch, which said nearly five o’clock. We felt the boat’s side bump softly against something, and the engine stopped. Then McGowan came into the cabin.

"Here we are," he said. "Now if you'll step out, you can finish off your night's rest."

It was still black dark, but someone took my arm and I was guided up a steep gangplank. I thought at first that I had come aboard some sort of houseboat, as I could see water underneath. But there was no opportunity to study things just then. We found ourselves in a little room with small square windows. There were two bunks on each side. I was too tired to ask questions. I heard McGowan and G. G. exchanging words about something, but I paid no attention. I crawled into one of those bunks and fell asleep.

II

I wish I'd had more chance to study that camp of Mr. McGowan's, because it was certainly a queer place. Well, I'll tell you about it as best I can. I don't know what time it was when I woke up again, but it can't have been very late. In the bunks across the room both Mr. Crockett and G. G. were asleep. I couldn't help wondering whether G. G. would have a chance to shave before Pandora saw him again, for he was getting very beardy. What I wanted more than anything else, to tell the truth, was a chance to get a good wash. This business of sleeping in your clothes is all right when you're used to it, I dare say, but I felt all frowsty. I stepped outside the door and

was surprised to see that we were on a big barge, just like the things you see towing behind tugs along the Sound, carrying coal or gravel. The room we were in was perched like a box up at one end of the barge. She was lying aground beside the bank, which rose up steeply from the water. It looked like a little river or canal, at the bottom of a narrow ravine. I suppose it was an inlet from the bay, but I couldn't see open water anywhere. We were shut in on both sides by high sandy slopes and pine trees. Alongside the barge lay a couple of motor boats. There was a little pier and some rowboats. One of the motor boats had a gangplank out, which ran into a square opening cut in the side of the barge, and some men were carrying boxes from the boat into the hold of the barge. The top of the barge was all decked over, and the ground rose up so that you could walk out on a plank from the deck right onto a little shelf or plateau of ground on the side of the hill. Here, in a cleared place among the trees, there were several rather dirty-looking tents, and a long picnic table laid on trestles. Near that was a stove, with a roof built over it, and a coloured man cooking. Some very rough-looking men were lounging about, sitting on tree stumps near the table, and smoking. In the open space near the tents one was working with the engine of a big motor truck, so I knew there must

be a road somewhere about. That motor truck seemed to be the only thing that connected me with civilization. The place reminded me somehow of a story I once read about a camp of bandits. It had such an air of free and easy savageness.

Except that in all the stories about bandits they wear very picturesque clothes. But these were disappointing, most of them wore greasy brown overalls. There must have been at least a dozen sitting round, besides those who were unloading cases from the launch. I didn't like their appearance, and I noticed right away that one of them pointed at me and said something, at which there rose a burst of vulgar laughing.

I walked along the deck of the barge, feeling rather unhappy, and then I saw McGowan. In spite of his illegal habits there was something about him that I liked. For one thing he was clean looking, and his face was shaved, which was getting to be a novelty in these adventures. He was standing on the pier just below the end of the barge, smoking a cigar. He looked up at me and said "Good-morning," quite politely.

I said Good-morning, as one always does no matter who says it, and then I wondered whether I ought to be stand-offish because this man was obviously some kind of a criminal. He grabbed the end of a rope that was hanging down and with his feet against the side of the barge and

pulling hand over hand he walked right up the side in the calmest way. I thought that this was very graceful for a man as stout and unlawful as he was, and rather admired him for it.

"Do you want some breakfast?" he asked.

"I want a bath," I said.

"Well now, that's something I hadn't thought of," he remarked. "Do you reckon that water's too cold for you?" He pointed to the creek.

"I guess I can stand it," I said, "if I can find any privacy." I was rather startled to find myself talking so frankly to a stranger, but I guess some of the J. J. A.'s bold spirit had worked its way into me.

He laughed. "Privacy is something we specialize in hereabouts," he said. "See here, you take one o' them rowboats and pull along the crick a piece, you'll find nice sandy beach and no one to bother you. You get your bath and then come back for breakfast. Is the old gent awake yet? He won't be wanting a bath too, will he?"

"I'll tell you something he needs mighty badly," I suggested, "and that's a clean shirt."

"Well," he replied, "I'll see what I can do. Anything else?"

"If you have a razor to spare, Mr. Evans could use it. When we kidnapped them, we didn't think of these details."

"What?" he exclaimed. "You a kidnapper.

yourself? Say, we ought to get along together fine."

There was something about Mr. McGowan that made him easy to talk to, and I told him briefly the origin of our expedition. He looked at me in a way that showed he was thinking.

"So you're Conway's girl?" he said. "Well now, that's nice, I always use the Conway trucks in my hauling business. That's one of 'em over there. I wish we had your father here, maybe he could tell me what's wrong with that differential. But, anyhow, they pull better over sandy roads than any of the others. Well, hop into the boat and go get your wash."

"Where does Phœbe wash?" I inquired. "You must have some accommodation for ladies?"

"Phœbe?" he exclaimed. "Bless my soul, you've got Phœbe wrong." He turned and bawled across to the group on the shore.

"Phœbe!" he shouted.

"Yessah, coming boss," yelled the coloured man.

"Breakfast for four in the cabin, Phœbe," he said. He turned to me with a grin. "That's Phœbe. It's a kind of a joke, he's so black we call him Phœbe Snow."

"Well, how about Phyllis?" I asked. "Is she black, too?"

"Phyllis is white enough, but she's a schooner. You may see her presently."

He helped me into the boat, and showed me where to row. A quarter of a mile along the creek I found a little back water with a tiny beach among tall grasses. I felt a bit timid, and I knew Miss Van Velsor would hardly approve, but I tried to encourage myself by remembering the pictures of mythology in the books about art. You know what silly ideas come into your head when you're alone. There were soft plumes of mist peeling off the water, and I suddenly realized it was cold and lonely. But loneliness was desirable under the circumstances. Anyhow, I wanted a dip more than anything else in the world, and since I've promised to write the truth I may as well admit that I had it, and dried myself with my stockings.

Then I rowed briskly back. Certainly this was a wild bit of country. Beyond McGowan's barge, the valley was narrow and deep, under rocky hillsides grown with vines and bushes. You could see trees almost overhead, outlined against the sky.

The men on shore were all gathered round the open-air table. As I climbed up the ladder onto the barge, Phœbe was carrying aboard a steaming pan of fried ham and eggs and a pot of coffee.

"Breakfast all ready, miss," he said with a grin. If he had been dressed in white he would have made a fine waiter for a dining car. I was

sorry the twins were not here to talk to him in his own language, they understand exactly how to say the right things to coloured people, things that make them grin and cackle the way they love to.

I found Mr. Crockett and McGowan sitting at a table in the cabin of the barge. Perhaps they had had some sort of a business talk, at any rate they did not seem to be angry. Indeed, I had a strange feeling that Mr. Crockett and McGowan had more in common with one another than I would have supposed. McGowan's crimes, whatever they were, must have been profitable, for the place was comfortably furnished. There was a carpet on the floor, little muslin curtains at the windows, and a desk with a roll of charts, and, to my surprise, a typewriter. I supposed that in his illegal career McGowan did not like to use handwriting. Phœbe put the food on the table. The coffee smelled good and Mr. Crockett looked almost cheerful.

"Come and have some breakfast," said McGowan. "And admire Mr. Alexander Juvenal Crockett's new shirt. Mark how your orders are obeyed!"

I had not known before that Mr. Crockett's middle name was Juvenal, something in fact that he was rather ashamed of and had managed to keep hidden from the public in all his powerful

career. But that McGowan was an ingenious individual, there was very little he did not know. What he said about the shirt was true—the old gentleman had discarded the terrible garment that had been so conspicuous. Inside his dress waistcoat there now appeared a blue shirt with a soft collar. It hung in large bagginess upon him and was furlongs too large, but at any rate it was clean.

“Where’s G. G.?” I asked.

“Another score for you,” said McGowan. “He’s shaving.”

At that very moment a door opened and G. G. appeared. He was splendid: his face was once more that of the superior person we had admired at old Van Velsor, his clear pale brown cheeks were as smooth as could be. What an improvement, I thought. He seemed anxious, but hungry, and we began to eat.

If only it had not been for the thought of the others, alone and unprotected on the island, I should not have minded so much being kidnapped. I said so.

“What do you mean alone?” said McGowan. “Why, they’re under gov’ment protection. There are two of the powerfulest-looking revenooers you ever see, looking after ’em. Mr. Waterman and Mr. Black they call ’emselves.”

This surprised us very much, and McGowan

explained how these two officers had turned up at his hotel, had shown great curiosity about doings on the island, and had finally made their way across in a boat.

"And a nice long pull they had," he said. "It'd made you smile to think of those birds blistering away at the oars while we was following in the launch. But I didn't like the looks of the situation. If they get too nosy hereabouts they'll bring a gov'ment cutter into the bay with a machine gun and all sorts of bad feelings. Of course I thought then the whole crowd of you was revenooers—I didn't take stock in that cock and bull yarn Hutchins pulled on me. I was still kinda doubtful till this morning, I took me a notion to run back to the island to pick up that rowboat. In the fuss last night I forgot about it. I reckon them folks had better stay there till we can come to terms. But on the beach I see a couple o' youngsters, mighty smart little devils too, and they tell me the whole gang, revenooers an' all, is busy huntin' for Captain Kidd's treasures."

This about Mr. Waterman and Mr. Black, of course, didn't mean anything to us, and we were more nervous than ever to think of Pandora and the girls mixed up with strangers. But Mr. Crockett said that he felt that Pandora would be more than a match for any two revenue officers.

"The way things is fixed," McGowan said,

shovelling bacon into his mouth, "I hardly know how to proceed. It's what they call an embarrassment of riches. Of course I can ask Mr. Alexander J. Crockett here to sign me a check in return for which I can set him ashore safe and sound and no harm done, or we could run right round to Swanakha Cove. But there's my friend the bird that owns the newspaper at Eastern Point. He surely would like to horn in on this story about Mr. Crockett and Mr. Evans going camping with a lot of young women on Thatcher's Island. I reckon he could sell it to the New York papers for big money."

G. G. looked angry and began to say something, but McGowan interrupted him.

"Hot words don't boil no coffee, young feller," he stated. "That's my weakness, always see both sides to a situation. I reckon I don't hanker after no more publicity than necessary, myself. I been having a lot to think about lately to keep the gov'ment people away from this here territory as it is. You wouldn't believe how much it costs me to pull all this phony stuff about Ku Klux Klan demonstrating and fiery crosses and such, over to the South Shore of the island, just to keep the gov'ment from getting too interested in the No'th Shore. Besides gov'ment's always got a lot to think about, and I don't want to add to their troubles. I think I see a good way to

clean this all up and no painfulness. You and Mr. Alexander J. Crockett square me up with them revenooers over to the island, and I'll set the whole crowd ashore as nice as can be. Anyhow, that's what I told them kids on the beach. I'm agoing to run back there this afternoon to see what they say about it. I particular don't want no fuss just now, with Phyllis gettin' in here maybe this afternoon."

Mr. Crockett now interrupted. I always enjoyed hearing him talk, because you were never quite certain from what he said just what he was thinking. So I was glad to hear him enter the argument with this skilful lawbreaker. In spite of his untailed dress coat and his weird attire, the old gentleman had lost none of his sharpness.

"Who, may I ask, is Phyllis?" he said. "Has she the honour to be Mrs. McGowan, from whom you quite naturally conceal some aspects of your enterprising industry?"

"No, sir," replied our host. "Phyllis is one of the sweetest schooners built in Nova Scotia, and she's due in here from Miquelon Island, under the French flag, all perfectly legal, with a load of what you might call glassware."

"Perfectly legal!" exclaimed Mr. Crockett. "You don't mean to say you have her come right in here, inside the bay, with a cargo of contraband?"

"That's just the trouble. Usual, I don't care for her to lay any closer than Block Island, and we sends off for the stuff in motor boats; but this time, for special reasons, I had it planned for her to come into harbour here. Well, anyhow, Mr. Crockett, if you and I had always kept within the law what a lot of interesting things we'd 'a' missed."

"Spare me your comments on law," said Mr. Crockett, quite irritably. "What do you think this is, a convention of the Bar Association? The deuce take the law. What I want to know is, how long are we to moulder here on this canal boat, and how about getting those girls back to school where they belong? For all I know, the whole business may be in the papers already. There are very unpleasant penalties for blackmail."

"At any rate," said G. G., "the girls are certain to be picked up by some passing boat. The main thing is to get them back safely. To-day's clear, and their signals will be seen."

"Don't you be too sure," said McGowan. "There's damn few boats in this bay that goes where I tell 'em not to."

He got up from the table and yawned.

"You'll excuse me," he remarked. "I been up all night, this is my time for a nap. This afternoon I'll run over and have another look at the

island, see if everything's O. K. Make yourselves at home." He threw himself on one of the bunks, rolled over with his back to us, and apparently was asleep immediately. Certainly he was a very unconventional man.

Of course what was in my mind all the time, since fortune had put me here alone with the two central figures of our adventure, was to do what I could to carry out Pandora's great plan: to get G. G.'s intellectual and beneficent influences at work softening the heart of the old capitalist toward radicalism. I could see that G. G. was terribly worried about the whole situation, and of course this was natural, not only on account of his affection for Pandora, but also because he now knew that his own career was nipped in the bud. After this affair, it would not be easy for him to get a position in any girls' school of high standing, for of course any headmistress, if this matter got into the papers, would always be fearing that he might suddenly disappear with half a dozen or so of her pupils. This weighed on my mind, because he was so purely innocent. But I put this part of the problem away from me, for I felt sure that either in the Conway Motors Corporation, or somewhere else, my father could find an opening for those great intelligent powers of his.

I felt that probably we were intruding by staying in the room while Mr. McGowan was sleep-

ing so vigorously, so I went out on the deck of the barge and persuaded Mr. Crockett to sit still while I fixed his flaps. G. G., always helpful, discovered somewhere on his clothes some buttons that he said were not utterly essential, and Phœbe, greatly pleased to be of service, found a needle and thread, which I should not have expected to be lying around in a camp of bandits. But then this whole place contradicted all my ideas of brigand life. Apparently they worked at night, instead of sitting singing around a camp-fire as one imagines. Now, in the bright early morning, they were all taking their ease. In the tents or under the pine trees I could see the men lying down for sleep. Mr. McGowan had introduced me to three of his leading criminals, and as these were the only ones whose names I got to know I will mention them now. They were known as Baldy, Doc, and Boze. Baldy was not unlike Mr. Crockett in general appearance, though not so old, his head was quite hairless, he and Hutchins seemed to have charge of the motor boat. Doc I guessed to be a doctor, he was more genteel than most of them and proved anxious to enter into conversation. Boze I will only allude to briefly here, he was a very beastly person, very large and foul. Phœbe, the blackest of the lot in colour, was quite one of the most decent.

Yet, though the place did not seem like a ban-

dit camp, we soon saw that there was a sort of soldierly discipline, and Mr. McGowan ruled his men with an iron hand. Mr. Crockett was greatly interested in the whole place and wandered about (after I had fixed his flaps) looking at everything. He was a laughable figure in his now most dreadful evening suit, his large army overcoat, and the sou'wester hat. Yet we were not much better, and though the merriment of some of the men was very vulgar I could hardly blame them. G. G. and I also strolled about, we wanted to climb up the side of the ravine (which was almost a cañon) to see if we could get a view of the landscape, but at every side of the camp we were turned back by an armed guard. One of these spoke to me in a very impertinent way, and G. G.'s eyes flashed with anger.

III

So presently we came back to the barge, where we sat in the sunshine on the roof, or the deck, or whatever the top of a barge is called. I saw Mr. Crockett approaching, and he looked in a better humour, for one of those criminals had given him a cigar in which he apparently found satisfaction. So I implored G. G. to seize the moment by the forward top as Shakespeare or some other author had said in our Advanced Poetry course, and now assail the old capitalist with arguments

and specifications. I should not mention this particular moment, which is rather sacred to me, if I had not promised Mr. Kennedy that I would write everything exactly as it happened, for the benefit of all those who got a very false idea of our episodes from the rumours that went about afterward. I implored G. G. to use this opportunity, and he looked at me with a sort of kindly sorrow in his face, and said "Why, you adorable innocent, the fate of nations is quite irrelevant at this moment. The question is, what is going to happen to you and the other girls?" Those were his exact words, unless Mr. Kennedy takes them out, as being too intimate, when he revises the manuscript. I was thrilled, of course, and yet a little taken aback, as an "innocent" is such a simple kind of thing to be, and I do not think G. G. quite realized how deeply I was continually striving to carry on the intentions and hopes that Pandora and I had so profoundly dreamed and our conviction that it was up to women to purify the scandals of public life.

But at any rate Mr. Crockett came and sat down with us, and as G. G. had sunk into a kind of melancholy I began to argue the matter myself, hoping for his assistance. I mentioned to Mr. Crockett some of the wrongs of capitalistic government, as many as I could remember, for instance the sale of arms to Mexico, and the dis-

gusting conduct of officials bartering their position for gold, and the displeasing matter of politicians mixing up with oil wells, and the misery inflicted upon the Ultimate Consumer by high taxation, caused in great part by expenditures on battle-ships. I wished that I had had with me my notebook (which was in my desk at school) where I had written down a number of these things, I had read them carefully in the radical magazines. When I spoke of high taxation, I thought for a moment that Mr. Crockett was touched in a vital spot, but he rallied and spoke very highly of tax-exempt securities. G. G. very nobly came to my assistance and expounded something of the excellencies of communism, or collectivism (I am ashamed to say that I always got these two a bit mixed), but Mr. Crockett, who had a definite way of saying things that were often hard to answer, cried out: "This place is as near to the communistic system as you are likely to find, my boy, but I notice you are mighty keen to get away from it."

Happily I was able to remember a line from one of G. G.'s lectures, it popped into my head, and I shouted it fiercely at the aged cynic. "The great poets were always in revolt against conventions," I quoted; "rebel Shelley lived in a world of ideal, where laws didn't even exist."

Then to my surprise a voice spoke from behind us. Mr. McGowan had come up quietly and had

been listening to our talk. He sat on the bulwark of the barge and I was rather disturbed to find that this man of crimes took my side in the argument.

"Say, kiddo," he began in his familiar way, "maybe they do shoot some straight dope into you in that school. That Ribald Shelley, or whatever you call him, had the right idea. Take it from me, gov'ment is mostly the bunk. Laws, why laws is for the weak, what's laws got to do with folks like your Mr. Shelley or me? Or with Alexander J. Crockett either, come to that. The only difference between Mr. Crockett and me is, we believe the same thing pretty much, but he finds it convenient to pretend he don't. Sure, that's all right, do what's convenient, my idea exactly. Look at here, I was turned loose on the east end of Long Island forty year ago, just a kiddy in shirt and pants and no capital but my ten knuckles. All right, it don't take me long to see how the world goes and most folks takes what they wants just so far's they can get away with it. I'm not tellin' you what's wrote in books, I'm tellin' you how it *is*. I've figured on these things, I'm kind of a thoughtful bird, what they call philosophy. Sure, I'm strong for capital when it's *my* capital you're talkin' about. And I'm all for gov'ment long's it's sensible, not just cranky. Why sure I am, I believe gov'ment itself ought to take over the liquor business and

sell honest stuff in a decent way over the counter, for a man to take home with him and drink it like a gentleman. And that would bring in money to the gov'ment, I guess, and cut down taxes, now wouldn't it? And if gov'ment would sell good liquor it'd do away with all these now hypocrites of rich fellers like Mr. Alexander J. Crockett chimin' in with the gov'ment in public and buyin' their liquor in private from birds like me because they know I deal in honest booze that won't put out their eyes with wood alcohol. Why they tell me that down in that there Senate House in Washington they keep a private wire to an eye specialist so's them Senators can call him up in a hurry, the kind of hootch they get down in Washington is that rotten. That's what comes of putting gov'ment way down there so far from the seashore where the good liquor comes from. And if gov'ment won't do what it ought to, which is supply good liquor to keep up the cheerfulness of its victims, why then I'll take the place of gov'ment and sell it myself. A law ain't any kind of a law when it runs agin the nat'ral decencies of folks, and it's one of the nat'ral decencies that a man wants a shot of decent liquor once in so often to loosen up his discontents about how hard he has to work and how hard he has to think. That's why women don't cut much ice in this here question because women don't think as hard as what

men do, and it's the people that thinks that has to warm up their wit now and then with a shot of decent liquor."

We were all so surprised at this speech that we listened in silence. I was grateful, then, that G. G. had trained us in our Advanced Rhetoric class to take mental notes of lectures and to remember the gist of an oration in our minds. It is due to his skilful training that I am able to reproduce Mr. McGowan's talk. I rather expected Mr. Crockett to reply on behalf of the government, but he sat watching the end of his cigar. He took off his sou'wester, for the sun was getting warm, and looked interested.

"No, *sir*," continued Mr. McGowan, "I'm glad I ain't got on my conscience some of the terrible things that gov'ment done in the course of what they calls enforcement. Why, look at here, I read in the papers that a Senator got shot by two revenue officers what was aiming at a bootlegger. Whyn't they anyways get revenooers that can shoot straight? You know what is the rock-bottom principle of this here civilization? It's pretending things is so what everyone knows ain't so, and that's how civilizations is built up. Nobody ain't civilized until he knows how to make believe certain things what other people agrees to make believe also. And that's what's goin' to be the salvation of these here Yew-nited

States, that by and bye gov'ment will just let up on trying to enforce prohibitioning. Of course they'll pretend it's still part of the law, but they won't worry about it none, no more than people worry about living up to what they say in churches. You know what the Good Book says, it says this country is dedicated to a prohibition that all men are free and equal. Well, sir, just to put the saloon out of biz they've gone and made us a laughing stock for philosophers. And when you talk about the philosophical state, why look at here, where will you find a better example of it than right here where these birds is engaged in the principles and practices of smuggling first-class liquor? You're a teacher of literature, Mr. Evans, so the young lady tells me; well, the fellow that wrote that play-acting piece about the duke and that sourbelly Jake and them other birds that lived in the woods and sang songs and roasted deers, he would have fallen for this stuff, yes, sir, those birds had nothing on us. By giminy, they had girls there too, dressed up like young fellers, walking round in doublets and hosiery same as we got here."

I couldn't help laughing at this, it was certainly a surprise to hear McGowan talking about *As You Like It*.

"What you say is very sensible," said Mr. Crockett. "I am not protesting your ethics. What

offends my business sense is to see a traffic managed in such a chancy and slipshod way. A business may be inethical in principle, in fact most business is necessarily so; but it must be orderly in practice. It must be Christian in detail so that it may be barbarous in the large. I venture, for instance, that the overhead expense of your business, and the methods of distribution, and your division of profits, are all in the highest degree unbusinesslike. This kidnapping, stealing boats, intimidating private individuals, is preposterous, because it subjects you to undue risks."

"You said it, old kid!" exclaimed McGowan. "I begin to reckon that you're really a great man. Sure, you're right. We're still primitive. You got to give us time. We can't afford to keep a private wire to Washington, not yet. But we got assets that'd surprise you. I know a newspaper in New York that'd pay me fifty thousand on the nail for a list of my private customers."

"Don't sell it without consulting me," said Mr. Crockett. "I'll pay you ten thousand more than their highest offer."

"You see?" cried McGowan, delighted, appealing to G. G. and me as though to an audience. "The old gent and I understands each other perfect. By golly, this is as good as huckleberry pie!" He got off the rail and walked up and down in great pleasure, waving his cigar.

"I think this is disgusting!" cried G. G. "Your arguments are debased quibbling, both of you are no better than pirates. The ideal state is not one that disregards law, but one where law is the same for all."

I was glad to see how this brief and manly statement refuted all the interesting but of course quite unsound arguments of the others. I was very much disappointed by old Mr. Crockett's attitude in this affair. Certainly he was no idealist.

"Sonny," said McGowan, with his usual irreverence, "there ain't no such State, not on Long Island anyhow. Also if I'm a pirate I'm an honest one. See here, you spoke of me as a bootlegger. The bootleggers and the moonshiners are the fellers I fight against all the time. Do you know what those birds do? They have stills aboard their ships, they make that rotgut half-cooked stuff of their own, they dilute it and counterfeit the labels—why, sure, some of 'em got printing presses aboard, they print their own faked labels and make their own tinfoil caps, and they sell that pizon stuff that sets you crazy. No, sir, I'm an importer, as I said before. I get it straight from Bahamas or from Miquelon and St. Pierre, real English and French stuff, ripe and good and honest. What I want now is to get this business down to sound principles. The old

man's right, there's too much risk. Those two fellers over to the island now, they may be cooking up trouble this minute."

All this made me rather sad. It was so different from Pandora's happy dreams of a thoughtful discussion in which the problems of government would be helpfully explained, and in which we would succeed in getting the time-worn capitalist to throw his countless millions on the side of peace and welfare. Mr. Crockett, sitting hunched up on the roof of the barge, looked to me like a degenerated old eagle on a perch.

While we were talking I noticed that some of the men had been gathering in a group on the shore. McGowan, with his back to them, had not seen, but there was something rather threatening in their attitudes. A loud burst of laughter from the group made him turn his head.

"Hey, Jerry!" shouted one of the men. "When does the old guy cough up?"

I did not quite understand this coarse phrase, but another yell made it clear. This time it was the unpleasant Boze who spoke.

"Not less than ten thousand," he shouted, adding vulgar remarks.

"And the girl thrown in," called another.

"Well, Mr. McGowan," said G. G., angrily, "so these are your Shakespearean philosophers?"

McGowan waved cheerfully to the group, as

though to suggest that he had the matter in hand. He said something to Mr. Crockett which I did not hear, and they went away to the cabin, leaving G. G. and me on deck.

I sat there, too grieved to speak. Now it was plain that we were at the mercy of an uncertain fate. All hope had faded of being able, with G. G., to convert Mr. Crockett to idealism. It seemed as though associating with McGowan called out the worst parts of his nature, just as had been the case when he was contaminated by Willie May and Jacqueline on the island. It was surprising to me that so powerful a man should be so easily dragged down by evil companionship. The most dreadful fears came to me. Suppose this McGowan, who had a certain charm in spite of his baseness, should get Mr. Crockett seriously interested in the smuggling career. It was plain that Mr. Crockett's business instincts, which were very active, relished the idea of studying the liquor trade as a commercial proposition. Already, from the way the old man was getting used to going about in those horrid clothes, it was evident that his culture was rapidly being undermined. Was it possible that he would consent to remain indefinitely in this disgusting state? Or even become, himself, a Millionaire Bootlegger? I remembered how Mother always insisted on Daddy dressing for dinner every eve-

ning, because she said, if you once ease up on a man you can never get him back to where he was. I wondered if Miss Van Velsor had made G. G. wear his dinner jacket in the evenings at school, or whether he had done it on account of his natural fineness? A desolate thought came to me, perhaps men were not really as splendid as they seemed. At any rate I knew now that Mrs. Ferry and Bradway were right in keeping so sharp a watch on Mr. Crockett.

Yet, disappointing as he was, it was still my duty to protect him, even against himself. I could hear him coughing, from where we sat. If he were ill, our troubles would be still worse. While I was having these dark ideas, the group of men on the bank had come closer. As I said, there was a plank across from the rail of the barge to the steep slant of the ground. Near this plank they stood, talking loudly, making vulgar remarks for us to overhear. One kept whistling an unpleasant tune. For quite a while we paid no attention, and G. G. sat not looking at them, but I could see he was getting angry.

"Perhaps I'd better go into the cabin," I said. "They'll stop if I go away."

"Stay where you are," he replied. "We may as well show them now that we're not afraid of them."

He turned round and said to the disgusting

Boze, who was the biggest of the gang and the noisiest, "You there, you big fellow! Keep your face shut, or I'll shut it for you."

Indeed I was amazed to hear the gentlemanly G. G., poet and teacher of Advanced Literature, use this powerful language. But I was proud of him, and wished the others of P. P. P. could have been there to witness these new phases of his complex nature.

There was an outcry of laughter and mocking cheers.

"Well, well, he can talk, can he?" they shouted, and some began chaffing Boze, who was greatly surprised.

"Go on, Boze," they urged him. "Clean him up. See what he'll do. Kill the revenooer!"

Boze came forward, his large displeasing face looked very uncongenial. He stood at the end of the gangplank and announced strongly what he thought about revenooers who went about under the protection of girls in trousers. I do not feel it needful to give the text of his coarseness.

G. G. stood up. "You come over here, one to one," he said impressively, "and I'll show you who needs protection."

"Fight, fight!" exclaimed the men, with horrid glee, just like a crowd of small boys, and from the other end of the camp, where there was a sort of storehouse dug into the side of the cliff,

still more of them came running to see the excitement.

Boze started across the plank, and now I was truly frightened, he was much bigger, and I did not believe that G. G.'s scholarly life had given him much experience in combat. But G. G. waited, I could see his elbow quivering a bit with nervousness. I suppose I am a coward, but I shut my eyes, I am not used to fighting, and I feared the brave idealist would be murdered then and there. But I heard a great roar of shout and laughter. G. G. told me afterward that as the man was about to jump onto the barge, with a very ugly look, he, G. G., had made a sudden movement as though he was going to strike him, and that the ruffian, taken by surprise, dodged and fell right off the narrow board. He went down flop, about fifteen feet, into the soft mud of the beach where the barge lay fast. The others yelled with laughter, for I think they were glad to see this powerful person discomfited. I looked over the rail and saw him, very wild with rage, just picking himself up. To my horror he quickly pulled a revolver from his trousers and fired. I thought then that all was over, and expected to see G. G. fall dead and mutilated. He looked very pale, but there was no bullet hole visible.

McGowan came rushing out of the cabin. He

was furious, and his criminals seemed afraid of him. He leaned over the rail and cursed them, and not even Boze answered back, though he glared and stood in the mud looking up at us and handling his revolver.

"You give me that shooter, you condemned fool," said McGowan. "Trouble enough already, d'you want to start something that'll get us all in wrong?"

The man hesitated, then he threw the dangerous weapon up, McGowan caught it neatly and put it in his pocket. Boze climbed the slippery clay bank and followed the others who had gone off in a sort of embarrassed way. But he looked threatening, and his look seemed to be angrier at me than any one. This I did not quite understand.

IV

It was not the habit of these savage men to eat any lunch. After their breakfast they usually slept and loafed about until afternoon, recovering from the exhausting crimes of the night, when their busy work was done. If my surroundings had been more peaceful I should have been hungry, for I have a very vital appetite, but now there were other things to worry me. When I went back to the cabin I found Mr. Crockett lying in a bunk very languid and flushed.

These excitements had been too much for his aged frame and he had added to his fever by drinking some of McGowan's whisky. He was a little delirious, I feared, for he kept saying that McGowan's stuff was the finest in the world, good enough to serve at a meeting of directors of a Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. McGowan sent in the man they called Doc to give his advice, but this creature was quite useless for, after pretending to examine Mr. Crockett's throat and listening to his chest, all he could do was say, "He roars quite some." I then suspected the fact, which he admitted, that long ago he had been an ostler in a horse doctor's stable. He recommended more whisky, which he said was the only medicine he himself took any stock in, so this only increased my difficulties, for Mr. Crockett agreed with this advice. But I could see that the old man was really ill. Doc said he was anxious to help, and suggested that we both sit by Mr. Crockett's bedside and watch his symptoms, but I dismissed him. My chief trouble was that Mr. Crockett had very little confidence in me; he kept wishing that Pandora was there because "that girl has some sense." Truly I wished this no less than he. But I tried to make him comfortable, cleaned up the cabin, and put away in the desk all the papers that he and Mr. McGowan had been

going over, for, as far as I could make out, the silly old man had been examining that criminal's accounts in order to make suggestions for the more efficient conduct of the business.

Meanwhile McGowan had been on shore, talking with his gang. There seemed to be a dispute about something, for looking out from the windows of the barge I could see him arguing strongly with his degraded assistants. G. G., who was pacing up and down the deck in a restless mood, told me that they had heard that Mr. Crockett was ill and they wanted to get the old man to promise them money before he got any worse. G. G. believed that the indignant importers (as he called them) thought that their leader had double-crossed them. This meant, he explained, that they thought McGowan had made some private agreement with the old capitalist and that they would be defrauded of their share of the booty. It was a proof of G. G.'s great general abilities, I thought, that he, a man of culture, also had such a clever understanding of the workings of crime and villainy.

But presently McGowan came back to the barge. He seemed not quite easy in his mind. Once or twice I noticed him look at the sky as though calculating the weather. Then he gave some sharp orders to Hutchins and I saw them getting the big gray motor boat ready. There

was a little sort of washroom behind the cabin, and from this a ladder went down into the hold of the barge, which I could see was piled high with all sorts of boxes. McGowan went up and down this a number of times, and often stopped to look at Mr. Crockett, who was muttering away about various things.

"What did the old guy want to take sick for?" he asked me.

"Well," I said, "if you take an aged man out of his bed in the middle of the night, and roll him down a cliff and then rush him about in a damp motor boat in the fog, with his flaps all undone too, what do you expect? You are going to get into serious trouble about this, Mr. McGowan, as sure as my name's Marjorie Conway."

Infernal regions, he replied, or that was the gist of it. Then I heard the sudden going of an engine and that hollow gargling noise that the exhaust of a launch makes. Looking out, I saw the motor boat, with McGowan at the wheel, speeding down the creek with big waves spreading out like a fan behind her. He was going over to the island, I supposed, to find out about those revenooers, and at least we would be able to hear what was happening.

So for a while things were calm. McGowan had put a burly importer at the gangplank, giv-

ing us strict orders not to leave the barge. Mr. Crockett fell into a slumber, and G. G. and I sat down behind the cabin, where the men on shore could not see us, for we believed it irritated them to be reminded of our presence. Here we had a pleasant chat, trying to keep our minds on happier subjects than our evil situation. I praised Pandora and told him, what he had never before rightly understood, just how our strange expedition had come to pass, and with what genius our leader had plotted the whole campaign. Of course, I admitted, things had gone horribly wrong, and our careers were now sadly stained by violence and ill fame. It is lucky, I said, that we are all in the Senior Class, with our education almost accomplished, for if this has got into the papers, no other well-bred school would accept us as pupils; and I outlined my own plan for getting a position somewhere in business. For though still rather young, I felt that these experiences had done a good deal to mature and harden my nature, once so girlish and gay. Pandora, I said, had sometimes spoken of the idea of starting some business of her own and hiring me as stenographer, for I am not bad at the typewriter. G. G., to my surprise, was quite calm at the idea of Miss Van Velsor's school going to rack and ruin.

As we sat there we became aware of some sort

of commotion proceeding on shore. We heard shouts and looking in that direction saw the importers hastening about in excitement. The man at the gangplank left his post, and they all consulted together. Then they came hurrying down to the wharf beyond the barge, where the other and larger launch was lying. This vessel was almost as large as a tugboat, very dirty-looking, but like all Mr. McGowan's navy, fast. They piled in and off they went, shouting loudly and waving to us with a sort of jeering good humour. I wondered what was up, the camp was left practically empty. I could only see Phœbe, who was cutting up some meat with a big cleaver, on the table under the trees. I suggested that perhaps there was going to be a raid of fierce revenooers, but G. G.'s idea was that the *Phyllis* must have arrived in the bay.

I was tired of being cooped up in the barge. Mr. Crockett was still asleep, and G. G. said he would keep an eye on him, so as our guard was now gone I thought I would stroll over and talk to Phœbe, the only one of these criminals with whom I felt at all congenial. Besides, I was hungry, and I thought that Phœbe could give me a sandwich, which he did. I honestly had no idea of going farther, but after eating a large slab of ham I was thirsty, and Phœbe showed me the path leading to a spring, part way up

the hill. And having gone that far, I could not resist the desire to climb to the top of the cliff. The path zigzagged steeply among the pine trees, slippery walking on account of the needles. But I was tremendously glad when I got up, for not only was there a fresh cool sea air (down in that ravine it was close and marshy-smelling) but also a glorious view. Now I could get an idea of where we were. I could see the sort of canal where the barge lay. It was a crooked inlet from Paumanok Bay, and its opening was covered by a long bending sandbar that concealed it unless you came very close. This inlet—Grog Harbour was Mr. McGowan's name for it—curved round into our narrow gully, and beyond the place where I had had my mythological bath it tapered off into a bright green swamp, though the ravine itself ran like a deep trench all the way across the neck of land to the Sound. I could see now why Mr. McGowan, with his usual cleverness, had chosen this headquarters for the importing trade, for he could get into Grog Harbour either from the Sound or from the Bay. And the ravine lay so hidden, by the steep sides and the trees, that it was not visible at all unless you looked right down into it. Even from the road that went out to the lighthouse at Orient Point you would not suspect it.

From the top of the cliff I could see the sweep of the Sound to the north, and turning to look behind, there was Thatcher's Island stretched out across the middle of the bay. My heart beat strongly to see that line of wooded shore. Of course I could not scan any details from that distance, but I was moved to think of my friends and wondered how they were faring. I could not see McGowan's boat, but there was the other launch, coming out into the North Channel. And then I saw the schooner they had talked about, and which Phœbe had told me they had gone off to visit. She was sailing past the rounded north end of the island. The scenery was all clear and lovely in the sunshine and I was filled, in spite of our sorrows, with a feeling of adventure.

Still a little above me was the highest ridge of the hill, where some big rocks rose out of the bushes, and I wanted, as one always does, to get to the very top, to see how far I could look. So I climbed onto a great stone, which was warm and covered with nice little lichens, and there I lay quietly looking at the sky. Then I began to think about G. G. and Mr. Crockett, and realized that it wasn't fair for me to slip away without telling them. I sat up, and then I noticed a queer thing. On the far side of this big rock I was

sure I saw a little puff of smoke. It rose in the air, and hung there (for there was no wind to speak of) and then sifted away. Someone has left the ashes of a bonfire burning, I thought, and it ought to be stamped out or it might set the bushes alight. So I slid down the rock, and landed feet first on the appalling Boze, who (as I now saw, too late) had been sitting under the shady side of the big boulder, smoking his pipe.

He jumped to his feet with a loud swear, for he was as frightened as I was, for an instant. He looked fiercely about, for I dare say he thought that G. G. was with me. And as soon as I could speak, for I was horridly startled, I saw that to make him think that was my best plan. So I apologized for disturbing him, and then shouted out loudly, "I'm coming!" to make him think that someone else was near by and waiting for me. But he was full of villainous cleverness, for he scrambled up to the top of the rock and looked widely round, and of course from there he could see that no one was in sight.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I slipped down the rock, I didn't mean to interrupt you, I must be going, Mr. Evans is waiting for me."

A very nasty look came on his face; I mean even nastier than his face was naturally.

"Now, now, don't be in such a hurry," he said. "Gosh, of course I knew we was going to be

good friends but I had no idea you'd travel way up here to keep me from being lonesome."

"I didn't!" I said indignantly. "If I'd known you were up here I would never have come."

I turned to go, and then the horrid creature grabbed my arm and wrenched me back.

"Sit down," he commanded savagely, and there was nothing else to do.

"Yes," he said slowly and smiling in a most uncomfortable way. "I suppose Jerry told you I was up here keeping a lookout for revenoo cutters, and you just thought it'd be kind to trot up and keep company. And good company too, I call it; a pretty girl in them neat little britches." With a most vulgar smirk he patted my knee.

This was so dreadful that I didn't know what to do, but I saw that the only way out of my embarrassing crisis was to keep cool, and I tried to imagine what the fearless Pandora would have done. I was trembling so that I was afraid he would notice it. I felt as though I was shaking the way a dog does after a cold bath, but I suppose it was my imagination. He put his arm around me, and I realized that to fight would only make things worse. He took his pipe out of his mouth.

"You know, kid," he said in the vulgarest way, "I miss a bit of sweethearting and I never got a chance to go with one of the bob-hair sort afore."

Suddenly he leaned over and holding me tight by the back of the neck he gave me a great disgusting kiss. The smell of his tobacco and of his greasy clothes was frightful, and I was desperate. I suppose I have got to be honest and I may as well say, since we are all fatally compromised anyhow, that like most girls I had sometimes wondered privately what it would be like to be kissed by some friendly person who was not a member of the family. But never in my wildest moments had I thought that this experience would first come to me in this loathsome revolting way.

So, as I say, I was desperate with shame and fright. His vast right hand held me by the neck, but in his left hand he had put his pipe, for greater convenience in his beastly schemes. It was about half smoked and full of hot ashes. I seized it wildly and hurled the ashes in his face. He yelled with pained surprise and I wriggled loose and ran madly round the rock and back toward the path. But I could hear him coming after me, and I knew he would soon catch me, and perhaps destroy me. I could hear his footsteps right behind. I had that awful feeling that my feet were made of lead, that I was hardly moving at all, though I dare say that for one fairly plump I was going rapidly. But now he was upon me, and seized me with a jerk that

nearly broke my shoulder. Bits of tobacco ashes were still sticking to his bristly face and under his fierce bloodshot eyes as he glared at me and held me tight. I was too terrified even to scream. He held his swarthy fist above me, and perhaps he was going to murder me. But I heard a loud explosion and his arm fell. I saw blood running from his wrist. There was McGowan coming out of the woods at the top of the cliff, and a revolver in his hand. The licentious Boze had a look of strange surprise and pain. He held his wounded arm and cursed. McGowan approached, but I was too sick and frightened to hear what he was saying. I ran past him and stumbled blindly down the steep path. In the cleared plateau over the creek everything was surprisingly peaceable. Phœbe was still at the cookstove and stared as I hurried by. McGowan's gray launch was at the pier, but I hardly looked at it. I ran dizzily over the gang-plank, half expecting to totter off into the mud. My only thought was to get into the cabin, any place where I could hide and forget these degraded scenes. Then, as I burst into the room, I saw Pandora.

She turned round and exclaimed my name.

"Pan!" I said. And, the last shame in a shameful chapter, I snivelled.

V

I could see that what she had been through had left a mark on the J. J. A. There was both spunk and sorrow in her eye. We had no time just then to narrate our private adventures to one another; but I felt strength come back to me as I saw her so capably ministering to the prostrate Mr. Crockett. Besides, in his extremities he was no longer a powerful capitalist but just an elderly gentleman who was quite seedy. Though Pandora, after studying what she called his respiration, said she believed that a good part of his weakness was the natural result of little sleep, irregular food, and too regular liquor. Certainly she exerted a surprising influence over the dogmatic old man, for he seemed better as soon as he knew she was there, and obeyed her with much docility. Part of her assurance, I guess, was due to the fact that when she arrived the gang of roughly behaved importers were away at the schooner. I feared that when they returned she would find that the situation was not so easy. But in the meantime she acted with dashing leadership. She called imperiously to Phœbe to make some hot coffee for Mr. Crockett. I feared that if she began to question him she would learn that his experiences in the society

of these illegal importers had not availed to convert him at all toward true idealism. But he lay in his bunk scrutinizing us with a rather queer expression. Pandora set to work at once to make him a new skullcap out of a piece of quilt from McGowan's bunk. Her eyes were very bright when they rested upon G. G., and I wondered if she had had a chance to tell him of her remorse for having reproached him? I pondered how I could find a good chance to leave them alone together.

But things now happened swiftly, and I must try to put them down as they came, without frills.

Pandora told us briefly how McGowan had arrived at our island while the rest of them were busy at something or other behind the lodge. But she, with her usual quickness, had noticed the launch; she hurried to meet it, and fiercely questioned McGowan. When he admitted that Mr. Crockett was not well she had insisted on his taking her back with him at once. And McGowan did this, she said, because he was still under the belief that there was a party of angry revenue agents concealed on the island. So with deep guile she did not tell him the true identity of Mr. Kennedy and Tom Carmichael. This, she said, was a trump card that she held suspended over his head, and I admired her cunning. Of course we were relieved to know that

now the other members were well guarded by two chivalrous men, and one of these a near and dear kinsman.

But we had not more than grasped the bare outlines of all this when McGowan returned to the barge. He looked rather grave, and eyed me furtively as though wondering whether I had mentioned my unpleasantness with Boze. That scandalous episode, of course, I had kept to myself. It was now dark, and Phœbe brought in some supper. We sat down to eat, but the repast was not a success. McGowan kept getting up and looking off down the creek. Mr. Crockett said that he felt his vitality steadily waning and suggested stimulants, which Pandora sternly denied. And G. G., after being reserved and gloomy, suddenly turned upon McGowan.

"See here," he said, "it's about time we had an understanding. How long does this nonsense continue? When are you going to put Mr. Crockett and these girls safe ashore at Eastern Point?"

And then we had another surprise.

"Just look this way, Mr. McGowan," said Mr. Crockett sharply, and not at all in the voice of a perishing invalid. We all turned, and saw him sitting up in his bunk with a revolver pointed at the unscrupulous importer.

"Now, Mr. McGowan," said the old man,

"we'll get down to business. I'm not any sicker than you are: that was just a little trick Mr. Evans and I framed up for reasons of our own. You ought to know that the liquor you serve here is strong enough to make even an old carcass like me pretty lively. I've got sufficient information out of your papers to put you behind bars for twenty years. I tell you, I'm not accustomed to being bulldozed by common hoodlums."

I must admit that the bold McGowan was not easily flustered. He poured another cup of coffee and smiled.

"I hand it to you," he said. "You're a good old guy. You deserve all you got. I'm glad you're heeled. I've got a notion you may need it presently." Then to my further astonishment he took a revolver from his pocket and handed it over to G. G.

"Sonny," he said, "you better have one too."

"Come," said Mr. Crockett, "no grandstand play. This is serious. If you think you can hold us up for ransom you're much mistaken. What are you going to do?"

"Do? Why, get us all out of this mess, I reckon. You give me an O. K. on them revenooers on Thatcher's Island, and a clean bill of health with your friend Huntington. I'll see the kids gets back all right. But I ain't going to have this here public-spirited traffic busted up

pleasant, you'd better listen to me. I'm going to buzz over to the schooner and see what them birds are up to. You folks sit tight here. If any one monkeys with you, pull a gun on him. I'll be back."

So now we were in a strange situation indeed. In a way we were prisoners on that barge, and yet there was apparently no one to keep us from escaping. After McGowan's launch had spluttered away into the dark there was no sign of life in the camp, except a small fire on the ground in front of one of the tents. There we could see the wounded Boze sitting and talking in a grumbling angry way to Phœbe. He kept shouting out unpleasantly into the darkness and the others wondered what he was raving about. I could guess the cause of his rage but I said nothing. G. G. and I were rather in favour of making a sudden sortie, for I believe that with luck we could have escaped from the camp and got over to the lighthouse road. My look at the geography of the region had given me an idea of how the land lay, and I guess my wild experiences had done much to embolden my natural timidity. But Pandora said that the risk was too great, with Mr. Crockett in his feeble state. For though he had made a gallant bluff, he really was not powerful. Moreover, though it seems foolish, I had a strange notion that Mr. Crockett

and Pandora both somehow relished the dark foreboding of adventure and disaster that was upon us. Mr. Crockett emerged from his bunk and tottered about examining our defences. In case of a siege, he said, we must take refuge in the hold of the vessel. This we explored by candlelight, and G. G. built up a kind of refuge surrounded by cases of whisky. These boxes were stamped with a name which I have not forgotten, *Sandy Mac's Particular* they said, and Mr. Crockett remarked that if we perished it would be in the pleasantest surroundings. At any rate it was a queer scene, down in the shadows of that ancient smelly hull, Pandora holding the candle, Mr. Crockett peering about in his outrageous costume and little bonnet made of quilt, and G. G. and I piling up a fortification of whisky boxes. I kept wondering who was that Sandy Mac and why he was so particular.

"Perhaps you were not aware," Mr. Crockett finally exclaimed, "that my grandfather was a Scot. He came to this country in a sailing vessel in 1828; yes, sir, and he brought with him the family treasure, a copy of the Kilmarnock Edition. Mr. Evans, in your literary tuition, have you made plain to these girls the supreme sacredness of those words? The Kilmarnock Edition! I still have that copy in my library at Swanakha, and I only regret that it isn't here with me this

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evening. Pandora, I can imagine no place more congenial than this for a meeting of your Literary Club."

Truly we were surprised to hear this materialistic old man express an interest in literature, and I realized that it is not until you are cast away with people among scenes of peril and hardship that you really get to know the insides of their nature.

"I suppose it's Burns," said Pandora, who was always quick in her mind.

"Right you are!" cried Mr. Crockett, delighted. G. G. explained, however, that in our Advanced English we did not pay much attention to Burns, Miss Van Velsor deeming that poet not entirely suitable for the daughters of her patrons. Burns was listed in the school catalogue as *Elective but not Required*.

"The woman's crazy," said Mr. Crockett. "That's what I call real poetry. Why, I never go to church without thinking of the louse that Burns saw on a lady's hat. Wait a minute; I'll tell you just the piece for these surroundings."

He took off his quilted cap, climbed upon a box, and struck an attitude of oratory.

"Scotch Drink!" he exclaimed. "You literary people, do you know that poem?"

He began to recite, waving the revolver which he still held. He had quite forgotten it, and in

the course of his gestures he frequently pointed it at his thunderstruck audience, until fearing that his hereditary Scotch excitements would lead him to some distressing slaughter we all hid behind various ramparts. In spite of our alarm we enjoyed the occasion, however, and Pandora evidently had a sudden idea, for she ran up the ladder to the cabin.

Meanwhile Mr. Crockett forcibly announced these verses, which I have since looked up and copied:

“Let other Poets raise a fracas
 ’Bout vines, an’ wines, an’ drunken Bacchus,
 An’ crabbed names an’ stories wrack us,
 An’ grate our lug;
 I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us
 In glass or jug.”

“Scotch bear,” he interrupted himself, “that means Scotch barley.” Then he continued:

“O thou, my Muse; guid auld Scotch Drink,
 Whether thro’ wimplin’ worms thou jink,
 Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink
 In glorious faem,
 Inspire me; till I lisp an’ wink,
 To sing thy name!”

“Wimpling worms!” he cried. “Do you know what Burns means by wimpling worms? I defy any one here to explain it to me!”

But he was interrupted by Pandora's return, and we never did learn what the wimpling worms have to do with Scotch Drink: nor do I know to this day, though I have meant to ask. Pandora, however, came up behind him at this point and gently removed the perilous firearm from his grasp.

"Mr. Crockett," she said, in a tone of voice that when she uses no one can refuse her anything, also the surroundings in that gloomy cavern of candlelight and great piles of wooden boxes were strongly impressive, "if I let you have one more drink, just one, will you promise me something and not let your health be affected?"

The once inflexible old man was carried away by the Scotch romance and zeal of his inherited nature, and he nodded.

"My dear," he assented, "anything, *anything!*"

She handed him the bottle she had brought from the cabin. He did not even wait for a glass, but drank from the spout. Unsanitary as it was, we all followed suit. I drank after G. G., only a sip, but still there was something thrilling in doing so. Thus we commemorated the strange adventure we were in. I could see by Pandora's suppressed excitement that she was full of an idea.

Mr. Crockett had already forgotten his promise,

but as he turned to go Pandora produced a slip of paper. She spread it on a box and put the candle and a pencil by it. This hastily written document is now in my possession. It is one of the most sacred relics of our whole crusade; and if any one objects to the way it was accomplished I can only say that Pandora insists any means are justifiable when you are working for a Noble End.

The slip of paper said:

I solemnly pledge that after the present crisis I will work strongly for the cause of international peace and liberal ideals, and that I will see that Mr. Gloucester Evans's career is not damaged by compromising events which were not his fault. Also disarming battleships and influencing capital in the right direction.

Signed _____

Witnessed _____

Mr. Crockett signed the paper, and Pandora and I put our names down as witnesses. G. G. refused to sign, for he said he was an interested party.

"So are we all," said Pandora. "So is the whole world."

VI

Mr. Crockett retired to his bunk. Once or twice he asked us whether the barge had broken from her mooring, for he said he could plainly

feel a rolling motion, and that he had never been a good sailor. This could not be, for she was firmly aground. But Pandora and I were too weary to argue, and we sought the two beds on the opposite side of the cabin. G. G. was prowling somewhere about the deck, in the dark. One of the drawbacks of adventures like this is that you get so little sleep. Not even a *débutante*, Pandora said very cleverly, could get along with less sleep than we were doing. And I replied that perhaps we were lucky to have had an experience that would take the place of "coming out"; for certainly we should never be accepted in society when the news got round that we had been morally tainted by associating with bootleggers and idealists. Pandora said that she did not believe McGowan's gang were any more rowdy than some of the college boys she had seen at big parties. She added something about Tom Carmichael, but I didn't catch it, as I was just dropping off.

We were awakened, some time in the middle of the night, by a most appalling uproar. At first I truly thought that the barge was in flames, for a wavering red light shone through the cabin windows. Pandora and I sprang up. It was only too plain what had happened: the gang had come back from the schooner. A great bonfire had been made in the middle of the open space

on shore, and we could see the men throwing beams and barrels on it. There were catcalls and hoarse yells very vulgar to listen to. We could see the revelling importers outlined against the brightness, sometimes two or three of them would lean together as though embracing and then roll on the ground. Then they would get up again slowly and go staggering about. The noise was horrible. Mr. Crockett was still asleep, he slumbered calmly in spite of this hullabaloo.

G. G. appeared from outside. He looked very grim.

"We're in for it, I guess," he said. "I've been listening to their shouts. That ruffian McGowan is as bad as the rest of them. He's drunk too, and reeling about like the others. They'll come aboard here presently, when they get a little crazier."

"Oh, G. G.," said Pandora, "it's my fault, as usual. We should have gone away and hidden, as you and Marge wanted. I had no idea they'd be like this."

A wilder and more concerted yell sounded as she spoke.

"No time to talk about it now," he said. "I'm going to throw down that gangplank. It'll make it a bit harder for any of 'em to climb up. You girls wake Crockett and get him down the ladder into the hold. Don't show a light."

He went outside and crept along the deck,

hiding under the bulwark. Pandora shook Mr. Crockett. It was hard bringing him to and I realized with a sudden alarm how small and old he looked. He was in a sort of daze, and I wondered how we would ever get him down that ladder in the dark. But we did, somehow, for the noise was increasing on shore, and we were most awfully frightened. We were feeling our way between the piles of boxes, and trying to steer Mr. Crockett toward the hiding place we had fixed, when we were startled by a kind of hissing.

"Psst! Psst!" it sounded, and we halted.

"There's a wimpling worm," remarked Mr. Crockett jovially. "I can hear him wimple." With very tactless good cheer the strange old gentleman began to repeat poetry from Burns. This was no time to be polite, and I hastened to put my palm over his mouth, just as the savage Hutchins had done to me the night before. Associating with these buccaneers was teaching me many violent manners.

We stood still. We had not brought Mr. Crockett's revolver as our hands were full getting him down the ladder. If she had had it, Pandora admitted afterward, she would have fired into the dark just to relieve her feelings.

"Doan' shoot," came a very loud whisper. "Dis is Phœbe."

We heard a shuffling come closer in the darkness, and a coloured voice explained hoarsely: "See here, Miss Marge," he said, "Jerry sent me in here by de back way to help you-all. He's lettin' on he's tight, same as de rest of 'em, because if he don't dey'll spoil 'im. Now he says dat gang is all ripe fer trouble but he do de best he can to keep 'em in play. If dey 'spicion he's doublin' on 'em dey'll ruin us all. He say, tell Mist' Evans dat if Jerry come aboard wid de gang you folks jes' nachrally do whatever he tell you, cause he gotta act as if he mad at you-all. He say hang on to your nerve, he'll try hard."

Even from the bottom of the hold we could hear approaching yells.

"Dat's sure a bad crowd," said Phœbe. "It's de first time I ever see Jerry scared. Them fellows just crazy to get ahold of de old man's money. One good thing, though, Jerry got their guns away from 'em while they was soused. It's that wild-man Boze make mos' trouble. He got 'em steamed up with all kinda wrong ideahs. Jerry say, if Mist' Crockett protect him from de gov'ment he'll do all he can, fix things up."

Mr. Crockett was wide awake by this time.

"What is this?" he said angrily. "Another trick to frighten us?"

"No, *suh*," Phœbe insisted, "dis ain' no trick. Jerry send me aboa'd to help you-all. 'Deed I

don' savour to stick aroun' wid dat bunch. I'm no fightin' man, me, not even a bootlegger, Mist' Crockett. I'm jes' hired by 'em to do de cookin'."

"How'd you get here?"

"I was jes' comin' to that, Mist' Crockett. There's a little door cut through the side of the bahge, up in the bow, where Jerry brings in hootch from them boats. Jerry keeps the key to it, an' he give it to me. I creep roun' in the dahk an' I slip in dat-a-way an' lock it after me."

"Give me the key," said Mr. Crockett. "Marjorie, you go and tell Evans about this. Pandora and I'll stay down here and watch this coon."

He struck a match and Pandora found the candle we had left. Phœbe's eyes shone as white and round as billiard balls. I don't know whether he was truly pleased to be shut up with us in the hold, but certainly he showed no eagerness to be engaged in the riot outside.

I clambered up the ladder. The fire on shore was now spouting great sheets of flame that lit up the whole deck of the barge. I crawled on hands and knees beside the bulwark, and found G. G. working desperately to wrench loose the end of the gangplank.

"I can't do it," he said angrily. "The thing's bolted somehow, and I haven't any tools. It's too late anyhow; here they come."

There was a general shout and the crowd

round the fire came running toward the barge. Peeping over the rail, in the foreground I could plainly see McGowan, reeling on his feet, and Boze with his arm in a sling. All were yelling, waving, sprawling, and getting up again. There were fifteen or twenty, I guess, though they looked like more. I noticed one specially, whom I had not seen before. He had on a cap with a red nubbin, rather like what the French sailors wear, and seemed to hold himself a little apart from the rest.

It all happened so quickly that I scarcely had time to tell G. G. the gist of what Phœbe had said. I believed in Phœbe, myself, but having to tell it to G. G. so hastily I doubt if he really understood. At any rate I don't blame him for being suspicious.

"I don't believe a word of it," he said. "McGowan's a scoundrel, drunk too. I don't trust him.—Hurry, get me that revolver from the cabin table. Don't let them see you."

I hurried. From the cabin I called to Pandora in the hold, telling her what I was doing. "Take one revolver," I called to her. "I'm going to give G. G. the other."

When I got back to the gangplank, having kept myself out of sight, I handed the weapon up to G. G. The men had halted near the other end of the plank, and G. G. was talking.

"Don't be a fool," he said. "Do you think Mr. Crockett carries thousands of dollars round in his clothes?"

"He can sign a check!" shouted one of the ruffians, and there was a roar of drunken applause.

"If he signs a check," said G. G., "will you put us safely ashore?"

I could hear McGowan's voice. "Nothing doing," he said. "You know a check's no good. No bank would cash it; they'd smell something phony right off."

"That's right!" exclaimed several others. "Jerry's got a head on him. Jerry's the boy."

"I'll stay here with you till the check is paid," said G. G. "You can keep me as a hostage. Just put Crockett and the girls ashore."

It was wrong, I know, but I forgot myself. When G. G. said this I jumped up automatically and grabbed his arm.

"No, G. G.!" I said to him, "you sha'n't do it, you mustn't!"

He shook me off angrily. "Get down, lie low," he muttered. But they had seen me and there were more of those vulgar and disgusting cries and catcalls.

"There's one of 'em now," shouted someone.

"To hell with the money, turn loose the girls," roared another. They came nearer the plank, but

not hastily, for some were still sober enough to see that G. G. had a revolver.

I was desperate. I believed that our only chance of escape was in coöperating with McGowan; and yet G. G. did not realize this. McGowan had stepped out in front of the crowd, and evidently intended coming aboard. If G. G. shot him, as he was plainly threatening, we would all be done for. The rest would rush the barge.

McGowan was saying something, but I hardly know what, for at that instant my mind was abstracted. To my extreme horror Pandora came running along the deck from the cabin, with not even any attempt to conceal herself. Phœbe had told her something which she thought we ought to know at once.

But indeed I could see from G. G.'s attitude that now he thought we were lost, for the yells and threatenings of the mob increased, and they came nearer, the villains. But what Pandora blurted out to me suggested an inspiration. My eye, I don't know why, had again caught the French-looking man, who did not seem enthusiastic at these loathsome doings; and in the general drunken clamour he stayed a little to one side. I mention the following incident not to please myself, but because it really has a sort of moral and should encourage my younger readers

in the study of modern languages. For though I never got better than C in our French courses at Miss Van Velsor's, and failed entirely in the examination on *Hernani*, yet my acquaintance with the language was enough, in this moment of horror, to make myself understood.

I called out to that man, "Êtes-vous marin français?"

He was very much surprised, and the others were making such a detestable racket that we could speak practically unobserved. He took his cap off (actually!—how amazed I was, after what we had been through!) and replied that Yes, mademoiselle, he was.

"Est-ce que vous approuvez ces affaires détestables?" I cried in despair.

"Mais non, mais qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire? Les fous se sont tout à fait grisés."

"Dites à lui," I shouted, pointing to McGowan, "que le nègre est ici et nous comprenons. Nous avons le clef et nous attendons par la petite porte de derrière."

This French, I dare say, was pretty terrible. Thinking back about it, I believe I made the mistake I always do. I pronounced the word for "key" *cleff* instead of *clay*; but the man seemed to understand all right. I must make it plain that the noise and disorder was so great, those importers whooping and uttering oaths, that it

was possible for me to say these things without any one noticing specially. The man went over to McGowan and spoke to him.

McGowan looked at me and nodded. There was no time to lose, for the men were on the point of making a rush across the plank, and Boze was roaring threats and encouragements. McGowan stepped ahead of the others and shouted at them. His language was not mentionable and certainly suggested to them that he was coming aboard first, to settle our hash; but I felt that he really had some plan for salvation.

G. G., however, felt differently. Pandora and I were begging him not to shoot, that McGowan was trying to help us, but he pushed us behind him and leaped up on the railing. He stood there plain in the light of the bonfire, like Horatius at the bridge. He held up his revolver so that all could see it. There was a sudden silence. We could even hear the crackle of the fire.

"The first man on this plank gets a bullet," he shouted.

I suppose McGowan thought that G. G. understood his double-crossness. At any rate he yelled a fierce yell to his men, and then exclaiming, "Don't shoot!" he ran upon the gangplank. And indeed the reckless importer would have been deceased, as G. G. instantly pulled the trigger; but Pandora, with noble quickness, had

jumped forward and seized G. G.'s arm from behind. So the shot went wild. McGowan leaped upon G. G. and both crashed down together on the deck. The revolver fell and Pandora grabbed it. The rest of the enemy were all ready to follow their leader, but like the cowards they were they had been startled by the bang, and waited to see what had happened to McGowan. Also Pandora, filled with a wild excitement of battle, had jumped up on the bulwark and was holding the gun pointed at them. It is really wonderful how much one enjoys things like these in the actual moment, when you are desperate and thinking of nothing but crime.

G. G. and McGowan were rolling on the deck, fighting furiously. G. G., who was much more muscular than his literary frame seemed to suggest, very nearly strangled the gigantic importer before the latter got him under. Then there was an awful instant. I saw McGowan pull a firearm from his pocket, and I feared I had made a mistake, that he was going to assassinate our hero. But he fired it three times into the wood of the deck.

"Quick!" he exclaimed fiercely in G. G.'s ear. "Damn fool, I'm trying to help you. Grab this gun, tell 'em you've croaked me. I'm going to get the boat ready." He crawled off, out of sight under the bulwark, toward the cabin.

Now with a glow of hope G. G. perceived the stratagem. He scrambled up, snatched Pandora from the plank where she was daring the ruffians to approach, and yelled to them in their own kind of talk. Indeed in the warmth of combat even the cultured G. G. used awful speeches. He call Boze a person of very animal ancestry, and boasted that he had croaked McGowan. The same thing will happen to the next man that comes across, he cried.

But those brutal men had now gone too far to draw back. Infernal regions with Jerry, they bawled. And I saw some of them scattering to other parts to climb up the side of the barge. They were so drunk that they rolled and tumbled down the steep bank, but if they should find a ladder or ropes they could easily board the vessel or climb up over the rudder.

"Wait!" shouted G. G. in a voice of thunder. "The old man's sick. If this goes on, you'll kill him. Then you won't get any money at all. Keep quiet a few minutes; I'll see what I can get him to promise. Jerry's croaked, now you can all have his share."

But these disloyal importers no longer seemed to care much for their employer or for great wealth. They were too drunk. Infernal regions with the money, they kept roaring, and additional threats. G. G.'s valiant scheme to keep

them in check was not going to be a success. And now another horrible danger arose. At the stern of the barge, close to the cabin, there sprang up a great light and a ribald yell of cheers. They had piled barrels and all sorts of wood under the stern and set fire to it. I could see men running and tottering, carrying casks, rolling them down the bank, and howling with glee. There must have been inflammable liquor, whisky or gasoline, in some of these, the flame leaped yards high in an instant.

"This can't go on or we're busted," said G. G. "Marjorie, run down in the hold and see what McGowan's doing. Pan and I have revolvers. We'll stave them off up here."

Even in that dreadful moment I noticed that this was the first time G. G. had spoken of the J. J. A. by her one-syllable name, and I thought with pleasure of their growing intimacy.

I ran along the deck and dodged into the cabin. Flames were already curling over the stern and blistering the door. Should I run back and tell G. G. that in a few minutes their retreat would be cut off? I noticed that a wind had come up, which was driving the fire right onto the barge. But I thought it best to obey orders first, and tumbled fast down the ladder into the hold.

It was full of smoke. The light of the candle

dimly sparkled through wreaths of choking fog-giness. From outside, through the wooden hull, came loud thumps, yells, and G. G.'s voice fierce above the tumult. At first I could not find the others. The little fortress among the whisky boxes was empty. But then I heard Mr. Crockett coughing. Stumbling my way in a narrow aisle among the cases I found an open space near the square bow of the barge. The inscrutable old millionaire was quite calm, sitting on a box. "Well," he said hoarsely, "have they set fire to us?"

A draught of wind was blowing right through the cellar, as I always thought of it, though of course hold is the better word. This wind was bringing smoke and sharp fumes in increasing thickness. The reason for the draught I now saw, for McGowan and Phœbe had opened the little door that was used for bringing liquids into the barge. My heart suddenly jumped with hope, for I saw they had quietly brought the gray launch alongside. The ruffians on shore were so drunkenly busy in their frenzied attack on the landward side of the vessel they had not thought of the water exit.

McGowan was in the launch, and the French sailor with him. Phœbe was leaning out through the opening holding the boat alongside.

"Gawd's sake, Miss Mahge," he exclaimed,

"tell them other folks to hurry, befo' dem wild men gets wise to whut we doin'."

A great blast of smoke swept through the hold. Now I could hear, what I had not really noticed before, a gale had risen, the trees on the other side of the creek were noisy in the wind, and a shower of rain came splattering.

McGowan called savagely to Mr. Crockett to get aboard, and the old man crept carefully toward the opening. But I was already running back to summon G. G. and Pandora. I was just in time. I heard a revolver go off as I reached the deck. The bootleggers were swarming up the side of the barge. I saw one fall from the gangplank as G. G. shot. I seized Pandora's arm; we three ran together. The door to the cabin was almost in the flames. I stumbled on something and fell, but G. G. grabbed me and shoved me through. I could feel the burning heat right through my clothes.

We fell rather than stepped down that ladder. We had to feel our way through the smoke and darkness, in the passage through that illegal cargo. "This way, this way!" I kept saying wildly, as I went first. At the opening in the hull Phœbe was waiting. He and McGowan were holding the boat there with difficulty on account of the wind. Then the engine started, as we climbed in. At the same instant the men,

now all over the top of the barge, had discovered us and were swearing down from above. One of them, it was the treacherous Hutchins, began lowering himself on to the cabin roof of the launch. But at that instant McGowan and Phœbe pushed off, Hutchins fell into the water. The engine increased to a loud roar and we moved clear.

A tremendous gust of wind and rain stung our faces. G. G. and Pandora and I, scorched, wet, and quite thrillingly happy, flopped into the cabin where old Mr. Crockett was looking out of one of the tiny portholes, surveying the scene. The flames, flattened by wind, streamed wildly along the deck of the barge.

"Well," said Mr. Crockett, "I told you that Burns was the right poet for that place."

END OF PART FOUR

PART FIVE
TOLD BY MELVILLE KENNEDY

PART FIVE

NARRATIVE RESUMED BY MELVILLE
KENNEDY

I

I GOT up silently, drew out of sight behind my tree trunk, and pondered an instant what to do. There was something indescribably furtive about the stranger's figure as he peeped in at the window. He stepped to the doorway and was sharply outlined against the light. I could have potted him easily with my revolver, and had half a mind to wing him, just for good luck. But then, to my surprise, he tapped gently at the door. And there was more than mere furtiveness in his manner; there was timidity. This surely was no kidnapper.

I stepped out from behind the trunk and called loudly.

"What do you want?" I bawled.

He jumped round. "Hullo, hullo, I beg your pardon," he ejaculated, with every sign of extreme fright.

I could not quite believe it at first, but I came

closer and made certain. It was Bradway, old Crockett's valet—and in what a state. His neat clothes were torn and soiled, his face and hands scratched, and he was teetering with nervousness.

"My God, sir," he exclaimed. "I mean I beg your pardon, Mr. Kennedy, but have you found him?"

I took him inside, and gave him some whisky. Then Tom came dashing out, thinking that the lodge had again been invaded by bandits. "Is it more pirates?" yelled Willie May and Jacqueline, and were quite disappointed when they found only the valet, who was almost incoherent with combined excitement, nervousness, and pleasure at having discovered us.

He had come from the launch hired by Blackstone, the detective. They had anchored off the west side of the island a couple of hours before. Blackstone himself, with several of his officers, had motored to Eastern Point the previous day, and had accepted the story there current that McGowan had a party of revenooers marooned on the island, which every one in the town regarded as a good joke. But now Mrs. Ferry, who had persuaded herself that her father had been murdered, had insisted that they search Thatcher's Island as a last attempt. The story had been kept from the papers so far, but Mrs. Ferry was about to inform the regular police.

And the fathers of the girls, who had all been summoned, were at Swanakha, waiting for news.

It was after dark when Blackstone reached the island, Bradway told us. They did not know the location of the lodge as it was not marked on the chart. Running under the steep shore, they did not see our beacon from their anchorage. Blackstone and some of his men had gone along the shore to scout. Bradway himself was not supposed to leave the boat, but his anxiety drove him.

"Besides," he said, "I couldn't stand that woman any longer."

"What woman?" we asked, in surprise.

"Miss Van Velsor," he said. "She insisted on coming along. She's pretty near driven us crazy."

The girls looked at each other oddly.

So he had stumbled into one of the old lumber trails that ran down to the water, and followed it in the dark, crashing through thorns and thickets until he came out on high ground and saw our blaze.

There was no time to go into further detail, for at this moment Blackstone and his posse banged on the door and cried, "Hands Up!"

Perhaps it was lucky that the unfortunate Bradway was there, after all, for Blackstone did not know either Tom or me by sight, and he was all ready to believe that we ourselves were

two of the dangerous anarchists he had decided were at the bottom of the trouble. But Bradway was able to convince him, before his athletes had done much more than bruise us a little, and Blackstone was quick to apologize.

"You see, Mr. Kennedy," he said, "we've rounded up fifteen or so Reds who were suspected of knowing something about this affair. It's quite plain there's been an anarchist plot against Van Velsor's school for some time."

"Bunk!" cried Tom hotly. "Who ever supposed that Reds had anything to do with it!"

The question now was, what to do next? Blackstone was in high spirits at having run down some of the missing party. I believe he was almost inclined to forget the fact that Mr. Crockett, Pandora, Marjorie and Evans were still to seek. Tom was quick to remind him that we had got at least this far in the search twenty-four hours previously. We told him how the first three had gone, and the later escapade, apparently quite voluntary, of Pandora herself.

"There's queer things going on in this bay," he said. "As we come through the channel I could hear the devil of a row going on in that schooner over yonder. Bootlegging boat, most likely, all soused aboard. At Eastern Point they tell some story about McGowan having a hang-out in a creek over there on the north spit."

This sounded interesting. Tom was for setting off at once to explore, but I refused. It was unlikely that we could accomplish anything in the dark, and also there was a squall getting up. Already rain was pattering outside the doorway and the wind was rising. We would only make a mess of trying to locate any such place at night. So I insisted on Blackstone and his men returning in their launch to Eastern Point at once, to telephone to Mrs. Ferry.

"Come back as soon as it's daylight," I said, "and we'll get started. Bradway will stay here with us."

Tom and I went out with Blackstone, to show him the lumber trail which would be a short cut back to his launch. As soon as we got outside I could see that we were in for some old-fashioned weather. The wind was coming in great whoops from the southeast, with driving sprinkles of rain. The detectives went hastening off through the dark, picking their way with a flashlight. I did not envy them the trip, but certainly Mrs. Ferry must be notified as soon as possible. Perhaps I should have gone as far as the water myself, to see Miss Van Velsor, but somehow I didn't hanker to. I sent the girls back to get some more sleep, assuring them this would be the last night they would spend on Thatcher's Island.

But when the gray daylight came sifting through the windows I began to think I had made a mistake: that we should all have gone while we could. What a gale that was! The trees leaned and creaked; twigs and even good-sized boughs were tossed about; the low murky sky was one loud yell of wind, under which the rain fled in ragged level volleys. Even the lodge, which we had all been so eager to escape from, now seemed a homelike snug place. The admirable Bradway, after a nap in a chair beside the hearth, had bestirred himself to some purpose. When the yawning twins and Edna staggered out from their cubicles to do what they could in the way of breakfast, they found to their unbounded gratitude that the valet had already been active. First, I dare say, he had hunted about for some clothes to brush; but finding none (as we all slept in them) he had turned his attention to cuisine. The coffee was all out, but he had made tea and some sort of doughy pancakes. He insisted on serving us himself, though we urged him to sit down as one of the party. This, Edna remarked, was the first civilized meal eaten on the island.

Bradway's orderly instincts were specially offended by the deplorable state in which he found Willie May and Jacqueline; and it is true that what with dirt, apertures in their raiment,

and matted hair, they were not attractive. He found the stub of an old broom which he cut down into a fairly efficient whisk brush, and I discovered him giving them a good currying with this implement.

Presently we saw Blackstone's boat hastening across the bay. I was not a little alarmed at the sight. She was one of those speedy craft with small beam and low freeboard. Her course from Eastern Point kept her mostly in the trough, and the wind had kicked up a dangerous sea. She kept well out into the South Channel, beyond the bell buoy, and then ran in under the protection of East Whisker.

But we were all ready to go, and I thought we ought to make a shot at it. Heaven knows I was eager to get those girls ashore: we could explore this rumoured creek of McGowan's by land. And I remembered, then, the motor truck that Tom and I had encountered on the road from the lighthouse. The locations checked up pretty well. Blackstone had told me that on the chart this inlet—significantly known as Grog Harbour, he said—was just about in the direction where I had seen McGowan's launch carrying Pandora.

So in spite of the downpour and the gale we made ready to dash down the hill to the pier as soon as the detective's craft should come to land.

Then, at the last moment, we had one more flurry. Willie May and Jacqueline were not to be found. We looked about and shouted, and finally saw them running from the barn, bedraggled and slimy. It was plain that they had been having another look at their treasure cellar. But I had too much on my mind to scold them then. I remembered, just in time, to retrieve Pandora's cherished copy of *Assorted Humbugs*, which I had put for safety under the mattress of my bunk. We slithered down the steep path to the water, where the launch was already waiting. Edna's little rag of red flag, whipping wildly in the storm, was the only remaining evidence of Pandora's rather too perilous Pioneers. I wondered how much of all this Angus Huntington would believe when I told it to him.

II

I had rather keyed myself up to meeting Miss Van Velsor in the launch. She would be (I had reflected) even more irritating to me than usual, because she would undoubtedly be seasick. But to my relief Blackstone reported that when she saw the look of the bay she had taken the train back to Marathon. That, however, was the only thing there was to be relieved about. There were fifteen of us in the boat—the five girls, Tom,

Bradway and myself, Blackstone and four of his aides, and a skipper and engineer for the launch. And we had not gone very far before I saw how dangerously overloaded we were in this sea. Looking down on the bay from the top of that bluff I had not realized how rough it was. When we got out from under the shelter of the point, the storm caught us full. She rolled appallingly, and when we turned to take the waves head on, planning to shoot right across channel to the lee of the mainland, she pitched so that the screw was out of water half the time and I feared the engine would crock.

The girls were jammed in the little cabin, where at every heave something seemed to go smash. Willie May and Jacqueline were immediately ill, and for the first time during their adventures they were no trouble at all, for they crawled into corners and lay prostrate. Bradway collapsed, groaning faintly, and I don't think any of us were too comfortable. Tom hung on to a stanchion in the cockpit and growled that this was just our luck—which always seems to me about the most annoyingly futile of all remarks.

When we got out beyond the bell buoy, the skipper protested to Blackstone.

"I can't make it," he said. "If we try to force her across to Eastern Point, either she'll pound her bottom out, or else she'll roll over. I'm going

to turn and run with it till we get round that point yonder; then we'll be in shelter."

There was nothing to do but assent, though I am no partisan of "running with it" in a sea like that. But we headed round (I thought at least once that we would go clean over) and the boat shot like an arrow, swinging frightfully as the big waves went under her. Most of my sailing has been done in craft with a good healthy beam, like the *Pandora*; I don't want to be caught out again in water like that with a cigar-shaped hull full of young girls. I was remembering, rather morbidly, that we had already had one sea disaster in our family. But anyhow we rounded West Whisker and came toward the little cove where Blackstone had anchored the night before. And then there was a grind and a thrashing in the engine. Something had snapped in the gear box.

The skipper threw over his anchor, of course; but it was a trifling little toy, and, as I foresaw, it wouldn't hold, not in that gale. So there we were, drifting clean across the bay, with excellent likelihood of a smash on the other side—if she kept afloat that long. For while the hook was in touch with bottom, of course we dragged quartering to the flow of the sea; but when the water got too deep for the line, the anchor lifted clear and round we came. I thought I knew how

a boat could roll. Perhaps it was only the fact that there *were* so many of us, ballasting her down, that kept her from going turtle. Tom and I dug out the life belts and had them round the girls in a jiffy, but they were all so queasy by this time that they were indifferent whether they sank or swam. The engineer fiddled with his greasy cogs and bands on the shaft, but the movement of the boat was too violent for any repairs to be successful. The wind screamed, the rain and spray slashed like whips, and we reeled and wallowed. We dragged the girls out of the cabin and made them lie on the deck of the cockpit, holding on where they could, so that if she did go over they would at least have a chance to swim. We had nothing of which we could make a sea anchor.

We had only one chance. We were drifting directly down upon the schooner that we had seen from the island the afternoon before. In fact, I thought for a while that we were going to come crash against her nose. She was a big white wooden three-master, with a launch on a line astern. She had two anchors out and was plunging heavily: where she lay she caught the full heft of the sea, with ten miles of open water for that gale to churn. She was all snuggled down in seamanlike fashion, and had two large deckhouses, forward and aft. She looked to me

like a Frenchman. There was no one on deck, and in that smother of rain and flying spray we would hardly have been visible far away; but we got out our horn from a locker and blew lustily, in addition to the klaxon that the launch skipper was sounding for all he was worth. Then in her bows appeared a bearded fellow in a jersey, who looked aghast to see us coasting down upon him. He dodged out of sight and then reappeared, carrying a coil of line as though to throw it—which was sheer nonsense. With our momentum it would have snapped like thread.

What happened wouldn't be likely to occur again in a lifetime. Our anchor was still towing free, and as we wallowed past, only a few fathoms from actually colliding with her, our hook fouled on her starboard anchor chain. There was an anxious moment while we waited to see if our own hawser would hold the shock. I didn't dare to hope so, but by some miracle it did. The very violence of our rolling gave the rope some give and take. We swung round parallel with the ship, where the amazed faces of several shellbacks looked down on us. They threw us a line. The launch pitched and leaped alongside, and even with the fenders they hung, we narrowly missed being stove in.

A rope ladder did the rest. Even the girls, sick and giddy as they were, revived at the pros-

pect of escaping from our floating coffin. We scrambled up the schooner's flank. And herding into the deckhouse to escape the rain, we found a comfortable little saloon well tintured with tobacco smoke. There, at a table, sat Mr. Crockett, McGowan, and a dark-eyed young man, playing cards. This latter was evidently the famous G. G., but by no means the eccentric poet of my imagination. He was tall, lean, and well-knit and bronzed, somewhat tattered and with a curious smell of singed cloth exhaling from his person; but I liked his look. The appearance of old Mr. Crockett, however, was the most singular. Marjorie has hinted at it, but she has hardly done justice to the topic. His face was sprouting white patchy stubble, his dress suit was foul and gruesome with stains of every sort, and cocked merrily on his bald poll was a strange sort of tea-cosy of dirty red quilting from which projected tufts of grayish stuffing. The much-mentioned flaps were thrown debonairly open, for the cabin was heated by a stove; a coarse blue shirt puffed out over the opening of his vest.

The first three remarks on this occasion were pleasingly characteristic of those who uttered them. Bradway, emitting a tremulous whimper of joy, tottered over to his employer and seized his hand.

"Oh, Mr. Crockett!" he cried. "Oh, my God, sir, I mean I beg your pardon, sir, but your clothes, your clothes!"

McGowan, for his part, rose calmly from his chair. "Well, ain't we got fun?" he said smoothly. "Mr. Waterman and Mr. Black! The ink bottle twins! Do you fellows always throw the washbasins out of the window when you stop at a hotel?"

And Tom, crossing to Evans, looked him angrily in the face and ejaculated, "You damned roughneck!"

Blackstone, who had felt rather out of it hitherto, now seemed to fancy that the time had come to assert himself—and, I suppose, to justify his fees. He pushed forward and seized Evans by the arm, beckoning to his assistants in the doorway.

"Frisk him; look out for a gun!" he said. "This is the guy, all right. Dago face, high forehead, foreign look about the eyes, reg'lar Ellis Island type. Here, Mr. Carmichael, hold his arm while I see if there's any tattoo marks on the chest."

Evans' fist moved quickly; I'll say that for him. Blackstone stumbled back with a bleeding nose. The other detectives hustled forward. Tom attacked McGowan. For an instant there was a lively hurly-burly. Then a door opened

and Pandora and Marjorie appeared. They flung themselves upon Blackstone, who was pulling a gun.

"Stop, stop!" screamed one of them—I'm afraid it was Pandora. "Damn you, damn and hell, what do you think you're doing? Why, he saved our lives; yes, he did, and McGowan did too. Don't let them be such fools, Uncle Mel!"

It was high time to get these children back to a state of normalcy, I thought. Such language!

It required a little readjusting of ideas before we could all get our bearings. But the suave McGowan, with the instinct of a hotelkeeper, seemed to feel himself in the position of host, and he and Pandora—they were evidently on excellent terms—more or less took charge of the occasion. My own first concern was to assure myself that Crockett was all right.

"Don't worry about me," he answered my inquiries. "It was pretty rough for a bit, but I've had the time of my life. Jerry, how about opening up another bottle? Bradway, quit patting my legs. I'm not wet, and my clothes are all right."

"Nothing doing, Jerry," said Pandora. "Not another drop for Alexander J. until lunch time. Marge, take the girls forward to the galley and let 'em get dried out at the fire. This room's too crowded."

"Is this a pirate ship?" inquired Willie May feebly. She was recovering from her nausea.

McGowan looked sideways at Mr. Crockett.

"Pirates is mostly a matter of definition," he said.

"Well, good Lord, Kennedy," Tom blurted out in disgust. "Are you going to let these people pull this sort of rough stuff and get away with it?"

"My dear Tom," I said, "all in good time. Mr. Evans, what was it that the original Pandora did in the old Greek story? She opened a box, didn't she, and let out all kinds of trouble?"

"She lifted the lid," said Evans. "If I were you, Mr. Kennedy, I'd sit on that lid a bit heavier from now on."

"How soon can we get back to Swanakha?" I asked McGowan.

"Well, you folks that's all wet get dried off some and make yourselves comfortable," he said. "I'll see what the Frenchman says about getting up canvas. This gale'll ease to'rds sundown. But we got them two launches to tow, won't make it any easier."

"Yes, and there's a sloop we ought to be towing too," I said. McGowan had the grace to look embarrassed.

"Well, Mr. Kennedy, we'll talk that all over at lunch."

"Yes, I'm hungry," said Willie May. "I lost all my breakfast."

III

The *Phyllis*, of Miquelon, was a well-found craft. Even in that heavy blow, and straining at her chains, she kept her feet tidily; though of course to a landsman the movement was disconcerting. Blackstone and his detectives were in an ill humour, and also ill otherwise; they retired somewhere and we saw nothing of them for some time. Edna and the twins and Bradway also asked permission to secrete themselves, and were assigned to various bunks in the little coops adjoining the saloon. But Pandora and Marjorie seemed to have found their sea legs, and were now in the happiest spirits. And Willie May and Jacqueline, more by force of will than by any physical serenity, were rallying. They had a great deal to tell Mr. Crockett and sat with him in a corner of the cabin sofa. McGowan and the French skipper, La Rocque—who, Pandora said, had been instrumental in their escape from Grog Harbour—bustled about arranging a sort of festival. Eight of us—four girls, Mr. Crockett, Tom, Evans, and I, gathered for a really very decent lunch.

La Rocque and a coloured man, oddly named "Phœbe," served us, bringing the food aft from

the galley along the rain-swept deck. And then I heard loud reports in the adjoining pantry. McGowan came in with two large creaming bottles.

"Hullo!" I said. "Champagne? McGowan, I'll say this for you anyhow; you're a generous host."

"The host usually sits at the head of the table, don't he?" said the imperturbable creature. "At least, so they say in the Books of Etiquette. At the head of the table I call your attention to Mr. Alexander Juvenal Crockett."

"Pour the stuff, Jerry, pour the stuff!" said Mr. Crockett. "Yes, young people, I welcome you to my table."

"*Your* table?" I asked. "What do you mean? Have you turned smuggler?"

"Quite the contrary," he said. "Though even that might be defended. Jerry has pointed out to me that some eminent parson in England has preached that prohibition is an impertinence and that smuggling is justifiable."

"The Dean of Saint Paul's," said Jerry. "I like to keep up with what's in the papers. Speakin' of that, I'm relieved to hear you say that Mr. Crockett's camping trip hasn't gotten into any publicity."

"Quite right," continued Mr. Crockett hastily. "Well, I never believe in affronting the law un-

necessarily. Jerry having been so imprudent as to bring this schooner, loaded with champagne, into territorial waters, and there being considerable danger of investigation by revenooers, I felt it my duty to legalize the whole situation. Accordingly Jerry and I have had a little transaction. I have bought this vessel from him, lock, stock, barrel and—er—and bung; and of course her contents, whatever they may be, become now my personal stock.—I shall keep her as a private yacht, for the use of the Literary Club.”

“Mr. Crockett,” said Jerry, avoiding my eye, “felt that I ought to be recompensed for losses in the way of trade. That fire over to Grog Harbour last night cost me fifty thousand dollars’ worth of Scotch.”

“Why, you ruffian,” cried Tom, “you ought to be in jail. You know damn well you ought.”

“No, no,” said Mr. Crockett. “This whole affair has been most curious, and, well, extra-legal. There are delicate points involved.”

“I’ll have that sloop of yours put back in shape at once,” said McGowan to me. “In my own shipyard, and no expense for repairs.”

“Well, how about that treasure *we* found on the island,” said Jacqueline. “Will Mr. Crockett buy that from *us*?”

“Maybe your father, the Senator, would like to have a chance to bid,” suggested McGowan.

"He's one o' my good customers in Washington."

I was wondering whether any of these children would have any respect for the law hereafter. But my observation of the younger generation is that they don't have any respect for anything merely because they are told it is respectable. They like to make their own investigations.

"Well, friends," said Mr. Crockett, "pass around the wine. I have a little statement to make."

"Just a minute," said Tom. "I want to make an apology. I've been hearing some of the details of this rumpus, and I want to say that I'm sorry for having misjudged at least one person. I should like to propose a toast to a chap whose good nature was taken advantage of, and who has acted like a trump in a mighty awkward situation. I say, skoal to Mr. Evans."

"Tom, you're a good sort!" said Pandora, seizing his hand. We drank the round. The ship's clock struck two bells, and Marjorie asked what time it was.

"More to the point," said Evans, "what day of the week is it? I've lost count entirely."

"It's Friday afternoon, one o'clock," I said.

"Friday afternoon!" said Willie May. "Geometry class at two o'clock!"

"Advanced Poetry at three!" said Marjorie.

"Oh, well," said Jacqueline, "to-morrow's a holiday."

"As far as poetry's concerned," I said, "there's no reason why you should miss it." I took the still damp copy of *Assorted Humbugs* from my pocket and laid it on the table. "Here it is, quite advanced. It's high time you all got back to your studies."

"Here, what's that?" exclaimed Mr. Crockett. "Evans' poetry? I want that. I'm going to have it autographed and keep it for a souvenir. Besides, I think I have a right to a copy of any literature written by my secretary. I get awfully tired of people who think I'm so hard-boiled I don't know anything about poetry."

"Your secretary?" asked Pandora.

"Why, yes. I signed an agreement, didn't I? Mr. Evans is going down to Washington with me next week to help me talk about disarmament."

La Rocque came into the cabin and announced that the sky was clearing.

"Get canvas on her when it calms down a bit," said McGowan. "Run these folks round to Swanakha. If you don't mind, Mr. Crockett, I'll hop aboard my launch and buzz back to Eastern Point. I've got business to attend to."

"I'll go too," said Tom. "I'll ring up Mrs. Ferry and Miss Van Velsor."

It was no small job to bring McGowan's boat

alongside, but after the wind had moderated they managed it. McGowan was a man with a genius for informality. "Well, so long, all," he remarked casually. "Mr. Crockett, see you later." We watched them pull away from the ship, the gray launch (a fine sea boat; I admired her build, and wondered where he had stolen her) leaping like a porpoise over the tumbling crests. McGowan saluted genially, and shook the spray from his hair as a wave sloshed over them.

"Capable man," said Mr. Crockett, peering from the cabin doorway, as he waved his quilted headpiece in reply. "He might have a remarkable career before him if he chose."

"He has one, behind him," I said.

END OF PART FIVE

EPILOGUE
BY MARJORIE CONWAY

EPILOGUE

BY MARJORIE CONWAY

MR. KENNEDY says I am to have the last word, and there are several most important things to mention; some will be easy to say and others not so easy. Of course you may have guessed by this time that our great adventure was not so horrible a failure as we had feared. For it is well known how Mr. Crockett went to Washington and took G. G. with him, and collected all sorts of information and facts about international peacefulness, and how he arranged a loan for the French, provided they didn't use the money for militarism. This was only fair, as the French language had helped us so surprisingly in our crisis. And then he established the Crockett Foundation to help along idealism, and put G. G. in charge of it. Of course there were some—Miss Van Velsor, for instance—who said that Mr. Crockett had been doing that sort of thing all along. But we knew better. It was a result of our converting him; for we remembered from the articles in the

radical papers how dangerous and full of reactions Mr. Crockett had been at one time. Evidently it was Pandora's noble exploit that changed his character for the better, and brought so great an influence upon all sorts of capitalists.

But all this you know, or you may have suspected, since our crusade did get a good deal talked about and the most inaccurate gossip was uttered. What I must tell now, and what no one else can completely impart, is what befell on the last leg of our cruise.

We sailed from Paumanok Bay toward sunset, and the wind having gone down and the sky cleared, it was very lovely, though the *Phyllis* did bound about seriously in that rough water. Edna and the twins felt poorly, and could not be persuaded to emerge; and Bradway, that very gentlemanly person, was also quite decomposed, but his faithfulness to Mr. Crockett conquered the pangs of hell (as he said very frankly), and as Mr. Crockett insisted on being on deck, Bradway tagged along too, keeping a sharp eye on his aged employer. Willie May and Jacqueline, who should have been more considerate as only a short time before they also had been so grieved with suffering, found much amusement in watching Bradway as he tottered about. These children, indeed, were bent on extracting the last drops of pleasure from their adventure before

they went back to civilized life, and Pandora found them inventing more messages which they intended to cork up in the empty champagne bottles and throw into the water. And when Pandora pounced upon them, she was disgusted to find that one of these messages was a rudely composed rhyme they had invented, suggested by something they had heard. It went:

Pan, Pandora
Lifts the Lid
And lets out troubles—
Reckless kid!

And this useless nonsense, after their messages had been confiscated, they sang about the deck until Phœbe (who was really a person of quite fine instincts) lured them to the galley and silenced them with food.

So the *Phyllis*, under reefed sails and tilting far over in the breeze, sped through the North Channel and past the lighthouse, and we saw the last of the island that had grown so romantic to our hearts. M. La Rocque, the French captain, was very decent; he had become greatly interested in these surprising affairs, and when he found that Pandora was so keen about ships he allowed her to help him steer. She stood at the wheel with her hair tossing and the sunset light

on her face; the Sound, which was rough, was a rich purple colour as we turned westward for home. Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Crockett were now sitting in the cabin smoking and talking, and I found myself right up in the bow of the schooner, by the windlass in front of the little house for the crew. Here the big bowsprit ran pointing upward and one jib was tight and humming in the pressure of the breeze—though, as the wind was mostly behind us, one did not feel it much. I had never been in a really large sailing ship before; it was wonderful to feel her swing and soar. The bow would lift, up and up, until it seemed ready to ride clean out of the water; then with a rush and a joyful spreading of foam she would hurry down the slope of a wave. I sang to myself a bit, for I was most happy.

Then I looked round, hearing a step. It was G. G. There was a sort of back-draught from the big sail behind us, which tossed one's hair over one's face, and he shook his head in a very attractive way to clear his eyes. I dare say he will have his hair cut soon, I was thinking. In the reddish air his face was very golden brown but he looked tired.

"Hullo, Marjorie," he said, "you've picked out the nicest place in the ship."

"It is, now, G. G.," I said, and then I was sorry, for it sounded such an obvious compli-

ment, but I had merely said what I was thinking without meaning any harm. It was all right to call him G. G., I should explain, because once in the heat of battle and sudden slaughter Pandora and I had done so, and he knew we called him that, though happily he did not know what it meant.

"Well," he said, "I guess we're safely out of it now, though I hope you and Pandora won't try it again. I've been pretty badly scared the last few days. But I suppose I ought to be grateful. Mr. Crockett has offered me a corking job and I can get out of school-teaching."

"We'll miss you awfully," I said, "and there are all those poets we haven't studied yet, you promised to tell us about."

"It's too great a strain," he replied, "teaching in a girls' school when you——"

He stopped, but at once I knew his intimate secret. He meant that he loved Pandora, as I always guessed.

"Oh, G. G.!" I exclaimed, "I *am* glad. Do you know what I read in one of those radical papers? I read that some famous doctor said a man should be eight years older than his wife. That makes it just right!" (For I knew he was twenty-six, as one day Pan and I had been doing some office work for Miss Van Velsor and in the files we found G. G.'s application blank. It

said, *Born August 17, 1897*, and we were so disgusted that his birthday came during the vacation giving no chance for a celebration; though we had sent him anonymous postal cards.)

He looked startled.

"No," he said. "It doesn't quite make it right. I wonder if nine years is much worse than eight?"

"But it *is* eight years. She was born on April 23, 1905, Shakespeare's birthday."

"Who?" he said wildly.

"Pandora."

"My dear, my dearest Marge," he said, "Pandora has nothing to do with it. *You* are the one I mean. I suppose it's silly and I know you're a perfect child, and your father will be angry, but I can't help it."

And then there was an interval that I will not describe, until the most tragic thoughts assailed me.

"But, oh, G. G.!" I cried. "I'll have to have Pandora's permission before I can love you!"

"Why so?" he asked. "Pandora has got us into enough scrapes already. Now let's act on our own."

"But she adores you," I wailed. "I always regarded you as her goal in life."

He blushed most attractively and denied it.

"Nonsense," he replied forcefully. "Pandora

is too wild for my taste; besides she is very keen on Tom Carmichael. That's why they quarrel so. It's always a sure sign."

I was still stupefied by this astounding romance, but then, as had happened to almost everything lovely in our whole adventure, those two imps of torment appeared. I mean, of course, Willie May and Jacqueline. We heard a yelp of childish laughter, and off they went skipping in delight.

"Infernal regions," grumbled G. G. "I thought we could keep this secret for a while. Now it's all off."

However, nothing could quite spoil our noble happiness, and though I could hardly believe it was true, yet after all these strange experiences I was no longer a child and mature enough to face life. I told G. G. of my literary ambitions and he admitted that I had a natural gift for spelling. Then, as it was getting dark, we returned to the cabin. It was hard not to look self-conscious, but we did our best.

The others were all there, sitting round the table, and Willie May and Jacqueline nudged each other. We sat down most calmly, and G. G. hastened to make some remark to Mr. Crockett about international problems. But it was no use. We were ruined, for the two children broke into a new song. Their ingenuity was

truly worthy of a better cause. This time they exclaimed:

“Hum, hum, hum,
Bug, bug, bug!
I see sweethearts
Hug, hug, hug!”

Pandora broke into a ripple of laughter, and one look at her adorable face showed me that G. G. was right. She esteemed him most frightfully, but she didn't love him. You know what a difference there is.

“Shall we tell him what ‘G. G.’ means?” cried the relentless two.

“Keep quiet, you wimpling worms!” said Pandora, and she whispered a private word of affection into my ear, which was now so hot I could have fried an egg on it.

Mr. Crockett and Mr. Kennedy had been deep in conversation, but Mr. Crockett was always closely observant and not much escaped him. Mr. Kennedy didn't have nearly so noticing a disposition.

“Wimpling worms?” said the old capitalist. “Yes, that reminds me. Do you know, if I ever wanted to give a wedding present to people I'm very fond of, I believe the nicest thing I could think of would be that Kilmarnock Edition.”

But now Willie May and Jacqueline redeemed themselves for many atrocities. They whispered together, and then Jacqueline began unbuttoning that horrible grimy blouse of hers. We all waited, panic-stricken, not knowing what revelations were coming. Then she pulled out something she had on a string round her neck.

"The engagement ring!" she announced, laying it on the table.

"We found it in that old cavern!" said Willie May. "It *was* a treasure chamber, after all."

It was a queer old silver ring, flat and worn very thin, with an engraved pattern of bees still faintly visible.

Mr. Crockett was much interested. "Well, of all things," he said. "It *is* one of those old-time sweetheart rings; see the bees on it, the emblem of a honeymoon. I dare say Captain Kidd left it there."

"One Kidd lost it, and two kids found it," said Pandora. "Well, I think that was very decent of you both. We'll promote you to real members of the Club."

"They're not honey bees," said Jacqueline. "We've got it all doped out. They're humming bugs—assorted humming bugs."

But thank goodness this embarrassing topic was interrupted. A very white brightness dazzled through the cabin windows, and Pandora,

with an excited cry, ran out on deck. She returned in a moment and stood in the doorway, her face gay with triumph.

"It's all right, Uncle Mel!" she called. "I *did* get 'em home again, safe!"

She ran to the little stateroom doors and pounded vigorously. We could hear Edna and the twins lamenting weakly.

"Show a leg!" she shouted. "Show a leg, you swabs! Here's Captain Tastrom and the *Minerva*, come to pilot us in to Swanakha!"

THE END

